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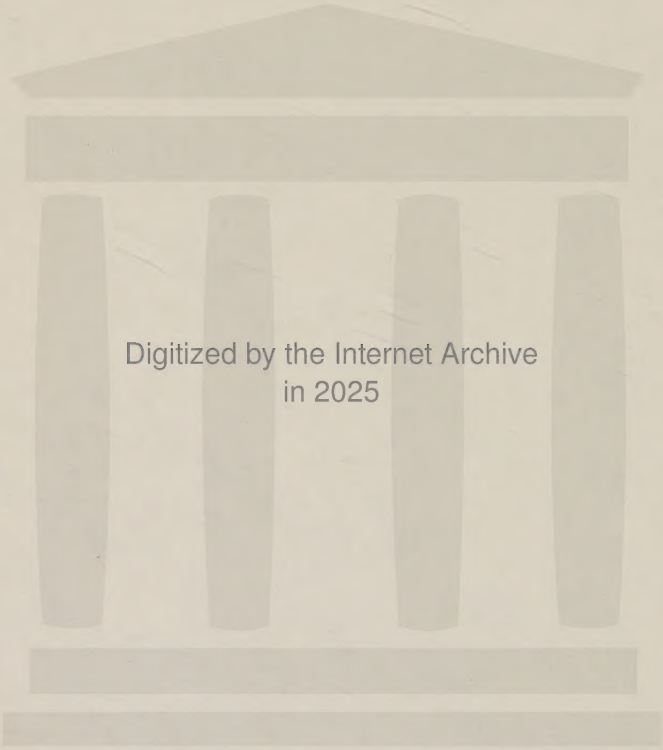
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THE TEACHING OF CHRIST

The Teaching of Christ

By
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THE CLAIM OF CHRIST AS TO THE VALUE OF HIS TEACHING

"Never man so spake."—*John vii. 46.*

THE CLAIM OF CHRIST AS TO THE VALUE OF HIS TEACHING

THE declaration with which this introductory study is prefaced was made by impartial, and probably, indifferent men, after listening to some of the things that Jesus said.

Earlier in the chapter we find this statement:

"The Pharisees heard the multitude murmuring these things concerning Him; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to take Him." [1]

The outcome was—

"The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why did ye not bring Him? The officers answered, Never man so spake." [2]

I make use of these words of the officers, whatever they intended by them, as a declaration of my conviction that the words of Christ were not the words of a merely human teacher.

My purpose in this series of meditations is to consider His teaching on some of the great themes of supreme interest to men, and I propose to do that in the simplest way possible.

Let it be understood that we start on the assumption that the New Testament view of the Person of Christ is to be accepted as true. I am not proposing a study of the words of Jesus, in order to lead to Christ. I rather desire to lead those who have already found Christ to a study of His words.

[1] John vii. 32. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 45–46.

In this, our first meditation, I propose to examine the claims which Christ made as to His own teaching. I take up the writings of other men, all of them valuable in greater or less degree—and it is always interesting to notice a man's estimate of the value of the things he says himself—and this I have observed; that the greatest human teachers have always been reticent as to the ultimate authority of their teaching. They have always admitted that there is room for interpretation, for question, for further investigation. That note is entirely absent from the teaching of Christ. There is no apology. He never said, It is natural therefore to suppose; It may probably be; or Consult the authorities.

Scattered through the Gospels there are many statements which He made concerning His teaching, some incidental, others outstanding, special, and definite; and it is impossible, and unnecessary for our present purpose, to deal with the whole of these. I propose to refer to the principal statements which I have described as outstanding, special, and definite; and in doing so we shall find two words employed in reference to His teaching which it may be well for us at once to consider.

Jesus sometimes spoke of "My words," sometimes of "My sayings," of "these words of Mine," "these sayings of Mine." We must, however, lay no emphasis at all upon this distinction, because our translators have not maintained the distinction between the Greek words to which I refer. Those who read the New Testament in the Greek will be careful to distinguish between the words *logos*, and *rhēma*; for such distinction may make all the difference in the interpretation of a particular passage. While, in considering His claims as to the value of His teaching, we need not tarry very long with such examination, yet it is important that we recognize the distinction.

John's Gospel opens with statements characterized by

awe-inspiring sublimity, and we are conscious of our inability to finally express their meaning. The suggestion of the opening statement is too mysterious, too high and too glorious for man's reaching, too profound for his fathoming. "In the beginning was the word."[1] In that declaration, however, John employed the particular word to which we must first give our attention. It is the word *logos*, translated here "Word." The root from which the word is derived means, to lay side by side; therefore to collect, and to set in order. Consequently it suggests words so set together and framed as to express thought; and therefore it refers to the thought itself, orderly and sequential, which is put together and expressed. Whenever we come to the word *logos*, therefore, we must remember its two values. The first is that of a method of expression; and the second is that of the truth which is expressed. That is the word which most often occurs as we examine what our Lord had to say about His own teaching.

The word *rhēma* simply means articulate speech, something beyond a mere sound; a sound which is a method of expression, or a sound conveying a meaning. I do not intend to suggest that when Jesus spoke of His own sayings, and described them by the word *rhēma* that He meant they were unimportant, for no saying of His could in any sense be unimportant.

In this study I shall indicate the distinction between *logos* and *rhēma* by translating the former, *word* or *words;* and the latter, *sayings*.

I propose, then, first a collocation of passages which reveal to us our Lord's estimate of the value of His own teaching. Having read these passages, we shall make a deduction of values, as preliminary to our future, and larger study.

[1] John i. 1.

Having first referred to the passages as they occur in the four Gospel stories, I shall then group them, so far as is possible, in the order in which they were spoken by the Lord. Finally, I shall attempt to make the deductions from them which are necessary to our subsequent studies.

In Matthew there are two principal statements of our Lord concerning His own teaching:

"Every one therefore which heareth these *words* of Mine and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, which built his house upon the rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon the rock. And every one that heareth these *words* of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and smote upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall thereof." [1]

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My *words* shall not pass away." [2]

The first statement concluded the Manifesto on the Mount.

The final word was spoken in the midst of the Manifesto of the ultimate movements of His Kingdom, the prophecy on Olivet.

In the Gospel of Mark we find two principal declarations:

"Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My *words* in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." [3]

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My *words* shall not pass away." [4]

In the Gospel of Luke we find the record of four great central claims of Jesus concerning His teaching:

[1] Matt. vii. 24–27.
[2] *Ibid.*, xxiv. 35.
[3] Mark viii. 38.
[4] *Ibid.*, xiii. 31.

"Every one that cometh unto Me, and heareth My *words*, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like; he is like a man building a house, who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood arose, the stream brake against that house, and could not shake it; because it had been well builded. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that built a house upon the earth without a foundation; against which the stream brake, and straightway it fell in; and the ruin of that house was great." [1]

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My *words*, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in His own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels." [2]

"Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My *words* shall not pass away." [3]

"And He said unto them, These are My *words* which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms, concerning Me. . . . And He said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Ye are witnesses of these things." [4]

In the Gospel of John we have three great central words:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My *word*, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life." [5]

There are two other statements in the course of the

[1] Luke vi. 47–49.
[2] *Ibid.*, ix. 26.
[3] *Ibid.*, xxi. 33.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxiv. 44–48.
[5] John v. 24.

controversy that followed, which I desire to link with this first declaration:

"The *sayings* that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life." [1]

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My *word*, he shall never see death." [2]

Note in each case the repetition of the thought of life.

The second of the great central words of this Gospel reads thus:

"If any man hear My *sayings*, and keep them not, I judge him not; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My *sayings*, hath One that judgeth him; the *word* that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day." [3]

Speaking in the upper room, and under the shadow of the Cross, to His Father, our Lord said:

"The *sayings* which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them." [4]

I at once confess that it seems to my own heart that the mere reading of these passages brings us into an atmosphere in which we are conscious of the august sublimity of Christ's conception of the value of His own teaching. My own conviction is that there is not a single one of these passages that we can believe to be true if we deny the Deity of our Lord. And if the statement be questioned, then take any of these claims, and put them into the lips of any other teacher, and it must at once be seen how entirely and absolutely they are out of place. They are words which claim a full and final authority for the One Who uttered them.

Now let me group them in chronological order. I do not set very much value upon this, but it is at least interesting to see, as far as possible, how His disciples heard His progressive claim as to His own teaching.

[1] John vi. 63. [2] *Ibid.*, viii. 51. [3] *Ibid.*, xii. 47. 48. [4] *Ibid.*, xvii. 8

I think the first in order is that recorded in the fifth chapter of John, in which He declared that His *word* believed, leads to the Father, and constitutes the medium of age-abiding life.

Next in order came the word at the close of the great Manifesto in which He so clearly and deliberately claimed that His *words* constitute the foundation upon which men must build, unless in the stress of storm their building is to be destroyed; or, in other words, that His teaching is the foundation of character.

Next in order came the words that Mark records, and Luke also, in which our Lord declared that His *words* constitute the test of the inspiration of life, and therefore the test of nobility for to-day and forever. Whosoever is, here and now, "ashamed of Me and of My *words*, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

The man who is to-day ashamed of the teaching of the Lord, does not accept His ideal, turns his life away from the revelation of character and nobility contained within His *words*; makes certain the inexorable result that, in the day of glory, when the ideals of Christ are vindicated, Christ will be ashamed of him. Why? Because that man has turned his back upon the true ideals of nobility, and has devoted himself to that which is base and low and mean. Christ thus claimed that His *words* constitute the true inspiration of life, which makes for nobility of character.

Next in order came the declaration recorded by John, that His *word* is to be the Divine standard of judgment; that by the *word* which He has spoken men are to be judged in that ultimate day, to which He so often made reference.

Then we come to that supreme declaration recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My *words* shall not pass away."

My memory goes back nine-and-thirty years to a morning when I received one of the earliest and profoundest impressions of my life. It was created by that poet-preacher, Thomas Jones. I was a boy in Walter's Road Church in Swansea, and I remember the occasion as though it were but yesterday. He gave out the text, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My *words* shall not pass away," and then in his own inimitable way he began, leaning on his pulpit, "And who is this young man that says this? Is not this the carpenter?" Then he led us on, and I saw the Lord that morning, and I have never forgotten from that day to this the tremendous importance of this statement. That impression comes back through the years to me now, with the accumulated testimony of any measure of attention I have been able to give to the teaching of Christ, and I believe the tremendous declaration that His word is the central and final authority. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My *words* shall not pass away."

Next in order we have His word in the intercessory prayer, spoken, not to men, but to His Father, in which He said, "Father, I have given them the *sayings* that Thou gavest Me," which was His claim that the things He had spoken, which at first often appear to be so fragmentary and broken and scattered, but in which very brokenness and scattering there is a great system, constitute the complete testimony of God to men.

And last in order comes that word spoken after His resurrection, in exposition of redemption, in which He declared, "These are My *words*." Everything in the Old Testament Scriptures, the law, the prophets, the psalms, all the teaching foretelling death and resurrection; the promise of repentance and remission of sins, He claimed as finding fulfillment in Himself, and as constituting the sum total of His teaching.

In conclusion let us make a declaration of values.

First, our Lord distinctly claimed that His teaching was Divine in its authority; and He made that claim in words which are most remarkable:

"I spake not from Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life eternal; the things therefore which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak." [1]

That was His own estimate. He declared that what He said was from God; that what He said was clearly spoken to men; and therefore that what He said should become the basis of judgment. This is a very supreme claim, a claim made by no other teacher with the same definiteness.

There is no apology here; there is no appeal to men to consider; there is no suggestion that if men will hear Him, they may thereafter form their own conclusion. He stands in the midst of humanity, and says that His teaching is Divine in its authority. That is true, or it is not true. We shall assume it as true as we go forward.

If, however, any are not able to assume that it is true, then there is a test; a test permitted, a test given by Jesus. "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself." [2]

Now, that is the full passage. We constantly quote that verse partially, as though Christ had said, If a man shall do His will, he shall know. We have no right to stop there—we must hear Christ through. That may be true in certain senses, but Christ declared that he that wills to do His will shall know of the teaching *whether it be of God.* Thus Christ said that the only way in which we can test His teaching is by obeying it; not by our own intellectual cleverness can we ever test the truth of His teaching; not by

[1] John xii. 49, 50. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 17.

any philosophy or wit or wisdom of our own; but if we will do what He says, in doing, we shall come to certainty as to whether or not the thing spoken was speech from God.

That test is in itself, if possible, a more supreme claim still. It is Christ's perpetual challenge to the race. He claims that His teaching is from God. He uttered that challenge in the days of His flesh; and He publishes it anew at this very hour, in the midst of all our complex life, and to all men. The test of the Divinity of His teaching is obedience to it. I will make this affirmation, which may be challenged, but I will make it and leave it:—No man ever tried and tested Christ's teaching in that way, and decided that it was untrue. Or to put it into positive form:—Every man who has obeyed the teaching of Christ has at last been compelled to say, This word that He spake to my soul was the Word of God. His first claim, then, was that His teaching is Divine in its authority.

The second claim that our Lord made for His own teaching was that, being Divine in authority, it was in order to human government. Again, passages we have already quoted must be repeated. Take that first word at the close of the Manifesto; "these sayings of Mine," are rock foundations for character; and in preparation for character, for conduct; and in preparation for conduct, for conception. That is a claim that if a man will make the *words* of Jesus the master-conceptions of his life, square his conduct with these conceptions; then his character will be strong enough to stand the stress and strain of all the storms that ever blow from earth or hell.

A man did *I* say? Yes, Christ always begins with the individual; but He does not end with the individual. Nevertheless He does not deal with society to the neglect of the individual, and He never suggests the folly of incorporating in the new and ultimate society men who are

other than men of perfected character. He always begins there; but He is challenging the statesmen of to-day with the same words:—Build on My *words* and you build well and forever. Build, however fairly and beautifully, with apparent refinement, upon anything else; then when the storm comes, all will be swept away. That is His own conception of the value of His teaching.

He claimed more than that. Not only is the foundation of character found in these words of His, they constitute the very medium of life, for if a man hear His *word*, it is the *word* which reveals the Father; and the man receiving it will believe the Father; and so the *word* will become the medium through which he will receive life. It not only affords the vision of the truth; it supplies the virtue that makes possible the victory.

He claimed also that for human government His *words* are the test of inspiration. What are our inspirations to-day? What are we dreaming about? What are the ideals formed in our hearts, which we are answering? Let us bring them into the light of Christ's teaching. Are we ashamed? If we follow that unworthy inspiration, there will come a day of great glory and revelation, when He will be ashamed of us.

These are supreme claims! The most monstrous fraud the world has ever known was this Jesus; or ultimate, supreme, final, He was very God, as well as very man.

In the third place He claimed that His teaching was for the proclamation of redemption. It is not without significance, with which we cannot now tarry, but to which we shall come again in the course of our studies, that the word He spoke beyond the Cross, and beyond the grave about His *words*, was that in which He declared that all the Old Testament Scriptures were of value, as they led up to Him; and that the central facts of all His ministry and His revelation were those of His death and of His resurrection;

that the deepest and profoundest passion of His heart, and the highest joy of His soul was that He came into human history to preach the evangel of repentance and remission of sins. He claimed that His *words* are the *words* which proclaim redemption for men and women who are lost.

The last claim is that His teaching is final. Heaven and earth pass, but the *words* abide. Nor do they abide only; they are complete; as He said to His Father: "I have given them Thy *word*." That is what the writer of the letter to the Hebrews meant when he said, "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." [1] In that speech everything was said that man needs to hear.

These are superlative claims. We start the present series of meditations, accepting them as true. From this point we shall go forward, desiring to hear what He has to say.

It seems as though, out of that overshadowing glory of this mount of worship, I again hear the voice that spoke to Peter, James, and John, on the holy mount long ago; and this is what it says: "This is My Son . . . hear ye Him." [2]

We started with the confession of impartial and indifferent men, "Never man so spake." We close with the declaration of God, "This is My Son . . . hear ye Him."

[1] Heb. i. 1, 2. [2] Luke ix. 35.

A. THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING PERSONALITIES

I. CONCERNING GOD

"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him."—*Matthew vi. 8.*

"Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."—*vi. 32.*

". . . Neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."—*xi. 27.*

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment."—*xxii. 37, 38.*

. . . . . .

"God is a Spirit."—*John iv. 24.*

"My Father worketh even until now, and I work."—*v. 17.*

"Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again."—*x. 17.*

"If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also: from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."—*xiv. 7.*

"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."—*xiv. 9.*

I

CONCERNING GOD

As we approach the theme of the teaching of Christ concerning God, inevitably we are conscious of its vastness and importance. We recognize also that if there is to be any teaching about God, or any understanding of that teaching, the revelation must be adjusted to human capacity, in order to human comprehension.

In the universe the fact of God is patent and open; but that vision is too large for human sight, and too vast for human comprehension. In order therefore that it may be known by men, it must somehow be brought into such narrowness of expression that they may hear and understand.

Both these facts—that of the vastness of the theme, and that of the necessity for a revelation adjusted to human capacity,—are recognized in the words of our Lord, "This is the age-abiding life, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send"; [1] the vastness of the fact in the words, "the only true God," and the Medium of manifestation adjusted to the capacity of humanity in the words, "Him Whom Thou didst send."

The first impression made upon the mind by a study of the words of Jesus about God is that of how little He said of Him. We have in these Gospel narratives no sustained argument for the existence of God. His existence was assumed by Jesus. In the words of Jesus we find no systematic teaching about the nature of God. That seems to be treated, from first to last, as incomprehensible. Jesus never argued for the existence of God; He assumed that existence.

[1] John xvii. 3.

He never taught men anything about God systematically; He seems to have taken it for granted that God is entirely beyond the ultimate comprehension of the finite mind.

On the other hand, there is no assumption on the part of Jesus, and nothing in His teaching that would lead us to the conclusion that He considered God to be unknowable. On the contrary, He declared incidentally, over and over again, and more than once quite emphatically, that God is revealed, and therefore can be known. That is the burden of the thought underlying the words recorded by Matthew, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son." So far we have only the assumption that the Father is known by the Son; but the declaration did not end there, for He continued, "and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him";[1] and in that word we discover His recognition of the fact, that God can be known by men, in measure, and accurately, through revelation.

In seeking for the teaching of Jesus concerning God, we have then, first, to recognize the One Whom He assumed in all His ministry; and secondly, to consider that One so far as He is revealed in the words of Jesus.

We must, however, at once recognize the fact that the words of Jesus do not constitute His complete revelation of the Father; that His teaching about God is not to be found finally in what He said, but in what He was, and in what He did. We are now dealing with His words, and I repeat, then, that as we listen to the words of Jesus two things seem to be necessary. If we would understand His thought of God, we must first recognize the One Whom He assumed, the One for Whose existence He never argued, the One Whose nature He never attempted systematically to explain, the One to Whom He perpetually re-

[1] Matt. xi. 27.

ferred in the course of all His conversation and of all His teaching; and, in order to this, we must listen to the references He made to that One, and so far as it is possible, attempt to understand them. Then, secondly, we must attempt to consider that One assumed, in so far as He was actually revealed in the teaching of Jesus.

The recognition of the God assumed by Jesus can only proceed so far as He is revealed in the references which prove the assumption. We claim that His references to God do prove His assumption of His existence. We claim further, that in a measure we may understand His thought of the One Whom He assumed, as we listen to His references to that One. The first question we have to ask is, By what references is that assumption proven; then, secondly, What do these references reveal?

When we come to the consideration of things definitely said concerning God, we should remember that such consideration must be conditioned by the method which the Teacher adopted. The method of Jesus in His teaching concerning God was twofold. First, He made certain clear declarations about God, but they were all incidental; one of them was separate and direct, but not one of them was an affirmation made for the sake of telling men something about God. Everything so said was for the sake of flinging light upon some condition of human life.

But the final teaching of Jesus, in His manifestation of God, was not that of the words of reference to God, nor that of the words of declaration concerning God; but that of the manifestation of His whole being and doing. To use the stately and mystic words of John, by the fact that "the Word was made flesh," did Christ bring to the world His full and final teaching concerning God. Therefore the final teaching of Jesus concerning God is not to be found in the words, but in Himself; and as we grow to a more

perfect knowledge of Christ, we shall ever be coming to a more perfect understanding of what He taught us concerning God.

In our present study, then, there are three things for us to do: first, to attempt to recognize His assumption by an examination of His references; secondly, to consider the few brief declarations He clearly made about God; and finally, to observe how these things prepare for the final teaching of His own Person.

Now when we attempt to recognize His assumption, as we have already pointed out, we can only do so by paying attention to His references. A careful reading of the actual words of Jesus, as they lie scattered through these four Gospels, reveals the fact that whether the teaching was the more public general teaching, or the more systematic teaching, such as the Manifesto of the Kingdom, or the final paschal discourses delivered to the disciples, or the great prophecies on Olivet; in all such teaching and converse, Jesus constantly referred to God. Those references are of supreme importance, not in the matter of what He said, but in the way in which He referred to God; or quite clearly, in the names of God which He employed. We find that in all the Gospels He is only reported to have referred to God by the use of three names or titles. There is a sense in which it would be correct to say He only referred to God by the use of two names, for in every case where He used the third, He did so in making a quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures. The One Whom He assumed, and to Whom He perpetually referred, He always called "God," or "Father," when speaking His own words. He also called Him "Lord" by quotation from the Old Testament Scriptures. The two outstanding and peculiar names, which Jesus employed in referring to the One Whose existence He assumed, were those of "God" and "Father."

I think that fact illuminates for us certain words in the epistles, to which I only refer in passing. I think that is what Paul meant when he said at the beginning of his Ephesian letter, "Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ."[1] I think that is what Peter meant when, in his letter, he wrote the identical words of Paul, "Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ."[2] While I am perfectly sure that each of these apostles recognized the relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the Eternal One, I think they were also remembering the way by which He described the One to Whom He was related, perpetually speaking of Him as God or as Father.

Let us then in the very simplest way possible consider these names. The word God stands for an abstract idea. It explains nothing. It suggests no truth concerning substance, attributes, or activities. Just as when we begin to consider the component colours of light, we lose light; so in the moment in which we begin that which for certain reasons is necessary and proper, a study of the nature and attributes and activities of God, we lose that supreme conception which the word suggests when used apart from definition.

When we begin to enquire the meaning of the Greek word *Theos* we find ourselves involved in a discussion of eight suggested derivations. And finally we shall have to be content to leave the matter where the scholars have left it, that most probably the underlying thought, the root from which the word came, was one meaning to implore, or to sacrifice; and that the word itself in its first use suggested One implored, or One to Whom sacrifice is given. That is all doubtful; but the fact of the darkness round the origin of the word is in itself suggestive.

If our Lord made use of that actual word, *Theos*, if He spoke a Greek dialect, there can be no question that the

[1] Eph. i. 3. [2] 1 Peter i. 3.

thought in His mind was the thought of the Hebrew word, *Elohim*, that majestic and mysterious plural in which the master conception is that of strength.

There is less doubt about the Latin word *Deus* than about the Greek word, for we are familiar with the fact that it comes from a root signifying to shine.

The origin of the word God of our own language is also clouded in obscurity. One thing is absolutely certain; it has no root connection with the word good. In all probability its root significance is exactly the same as that of the word *Theos;* Some one to be implored; Some one to whom sacrifice is offered.

If in this consideration I have succeeded in showing how ignorant we are as to the meaning of these words, that is in itself a preparation and a revelation. In all languages the words which stand for the Supreme Being represent an abstract idea; and yet in their very indefiniteness, in the fact that the light which seems to be upon them, when we commence to examine them, merges into a great darkness, which is the darkness of a light too bright to be examined, we have the first great suggestion about God. Thus Jesus perpetually used a word that attempted no definition, but that brought to the mind the conception of a Being, of an Existence, and of a conscious Existence. By all His uses of the word God, we realize that to Him God was One existing, apart from final definition, and yet forevermore so acting, as to make it possible for men to touch Him, to come into contact with Him, to have definite relationships with Him.

The second of these words, Father, is a word of an entirely different kind, bringing the mind into a new attitude in thinking of God. While the word God is abstract, and suggests separation, the word Father is relative, and suggests a relation.

Now it is of the utmost importance that we should

understand the true nature of the relation suggested; and as we give close attention to the word we find ourselves, I think, face to face with somewhat astonishing facts.

The word Father itself does not at all suggest what we mean by father to-day. It does not suggest the origination of life. The Greek word so translated, the Latin word which was derived from the Greek, and our word derived from the Latin, suggest, not the fountain of life, not the origin of life, but a nourisher, a succourer, one who cares for. The Aramaic word *Abba*, appearing in our New Testament, is used in our literal and immediate sense, but its root idea is figurative and remote.

The Father, then, is One Who nourishes, One Who succours, One Who cares for; One Who makes His sun to shine upon the evil as well as upon the good; One Whose relationship to those of whom He is Father, is the relationship of providence, of love and care, of thought, blessing and guidance. Jesus perpetually spoke of God as Father, essentially as His own Father, peculiarly as the Father of His disciples, inclusively as the Father of all men.

Thus, Father is a word that suggests a relationship between that God Who cannot be defined, and all the creatures of His hand. We are not now discussing the question of the Fatherhood of God, in the special New Testament sense as resulting from the regeneration of the individual. We are simply taking the word in the sense in which our Lord made use of it, as a revelation of God in His attitude towards, and relationship with, men.

The final word to be considered is the word Lord. Here again we have a word suggesting a relationship. A careful examination of the passages containing the records of our Lord's use of this word will show that, when using it, He was invariably quoting from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It may be that His quotations were from the

Septuagint, in all probability they were; and therefore it must be remembered that the Septuagint was successful in hiding certain uses of the titles of God, which are of the utmost value in the study of the Hebrew Scriptures. The Septuagint uniformly translated the Hebrew word *Adonahy*, and also the tetragrammaton, YHVH, which we render *Yahweh*, or *Jehovah;* by the Greek word *Kurios*. Now if we examine the passages which our Lord quoted, not in the Septuagint, but in the Hebrew versions, we shall find that the name of God in them was never *Adonahy*. So that every time we find the word Lord in the words of Jesus about God, we know that the thought of Jesus was that of the Hebrew conception of God, expressed in our word *Jehovah*.

It is not within the necessity of our present study to enter in any detail into the discussion of the suggestiveness of that title. It is sufficient to say that the suggestion was not that of the self-existence of God contained in the word *Elohim* with which the Old Testament Scriptures open. *Jehovah* suggested rather the fact that this Being, incomprehensible, utterly beyond the possibility of finite mind to perfectly understand, accommodates Himself to the necessities of His people; that He becomes whatever they need in the processes of His dealing with them. There are expositors of the New Testament who tell us that our Lord carried over that great thought from the Hebrew economy into the New, by constantly adopting the title of Father for God, as we have exactly the same thought of succour therein. I should personally consider that there is a distinction between them, because *Jehovah* ultimately suggests that incarnation by which God *became* flesh.

Having thus considered the words, we may now attempt to state what may be known of the One Whom Jesus assumed.

By the one word He most constantly made use of, which in our language is the word God, He assumed the being and

existence of One of Whom final definition is impossible. That One is, according to the suggestion of the Greek word, One Who may be implored, to Whom prayer may be made; according to the suggestion of the Hebrew word, One all-sufficient in strength; according to the suggestion of the Latin word, One shining in glory. It is impossible to define; but the fact is recognized that, behind the lilies, with the sparrows, numbering the hairs of the head, close at hand, far away, annihilating all distance in His Being, counting no time in the fact of His existence, is One. That is the final fact; and it is an amazing fact to us because we are finite; for *Elohim* is the mightiest name of God, more wonderful than *Jehovah*, if we were able to comprehend it. Because we are finite, the next, and perhaps in the light of the first fact, the yet more amazing fact is, that Jesus referred to this One as Father; recognizing by that name His relation to men, as the Nourisher of men, as the Succourer of men, as the One Who cares for men. Finally, by His quotation of the ancient Hebrew thought, He recognized that the methods of that One in His redemption of man is that of becoming whatever His people need, in order to the perfecting of those upon whom His love is set.

Our consideration of the definite and explicit declarations He made about this One must be brief, for they were very few.

About God He made one such declaration, and only one; and then, as I have already pointed out, not in order to make the declaration, but in order that by the making of it, He might teach another lesson. To the woman of Samaria He said, "God is Spirit." [1] There is no record in the New Testament of any other essential and final declaration concerning God from the lips of Jesus. In the declaration there are two values: the word God suggested Being, and in some sense of the word—more wonderful than we can

[1] John iv. 24.

comprehend—personality; and the word Spirit suggested the nature of the personality, Spirit being free from the limitation of space and time.

Let the context illuminate the declaration. Our Lord made the statement, not to a Jew, but to a Samaritan; not to a man, but to a woman; not to a fair and beautiful woman, but to a sinning woman; and He uttered the truth in order to teach that woman that ultimately, when men knew and understood, when His own work was completed, worship would be possible anywhere, no one place and no one method being necessary; no longer in Jerusalem, nor in this mountain, but wherever the worshipper is, who worships in spirit and in truth, there worship is possible; for God is Spirit. Therefore whether it be in cathedral or chapel or conventicle; or away from all, on the deep, on the mountain height, in the valley, in the desert, there He is; and if the heart be true, there is the shrine, there is the place of worship. That revelation about worship was the reason of the declaration. Thus in the midst of that teaching came the one great word of Christ concerning God, mystic, and utterly beyond our final analysis, "God is Spirit."

As to our Lord's declaration concerning the Father, I can but take illustrative words, for there were many. I think three will suffice.

In Matthew it is recorded that in the course of the Manifesto, twice over He said one thing about God as Father; practically He said it over and over again, but twice it comes out into definite form: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." [1]

In John we have a truth, often referred to in many different ways, crystallized into a definite statement. The Lord healed the man in the porches of Bethesda, and His enemies were criticizing Him for breaking Sabbath; when He said, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." [2]

[1] Matt. vi. 8, 32. [2] John v. 17.

A little later on, in the same Gospel of John, it is recorded that in speaking of His work He affirmed definitely a truth which was constantly illustrated in His teaching: "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life." [1]

I say these are but illustrations. If we take the whole of His teaching, we shall find these truths running all through His statements in varying applications; but I select these because of their definiteness.

The value of these statements we may epitomize by saying that He declared that the Father knows all the need of man; that the Father is at work in the midst of all the things that cause humanity suffering, that He knows no Sabbath because man has lost his Sabbath; that the Father loves; and that the supreme reason—a mystic and awe-inspiring declaration—of His love of the Son, is that the Son gives Himself to die for the saving of man.

Concerning the fact that this God and Father is Jehovah, He made only one declaration, and that by quotation. When some one asked Him, Which is the great commandment? His answer was immediately given, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; [2] and in that illuminative word Jesus taught that the law of Jehovah aims at creating love in the heart of man towards Himself, and towards his fellow man; and therefore that His law must be the outcome of the love of His heart.

Thus the supreme truths about God in the teachings of Jesus may thus be briefly stated; God in Himself is Spirit; towards all He is a Father, knowing, working, loving in His method; and He is Lord, the Author of a law born of love, and intended to produce love.

All this however but prepares for the final teaching. That final teaching is found in nothing Jesus said about God either directly or incidentally. He is in Himself the final teach-

[1] John x. 17. [2] Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

ing. This is His claim for Himself: "I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."[1] This is His claim concerning His relation to His Father in the world: "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and He to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."[2] This is His claim concerning men: "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."[3]

Thus, inclusively, He claimed that if men saw Him, they saw God; that His final teaching concerning God was not that of His words, but that of Himself. Therefore, if I would know this God Who is Spirit, this Father Who knows and works and loves, this Lord Who is Lawgiver, Himself forevermore becoming what I need, I must know Him through Jesus. To put the matter in another way; if I know this Jesus—not listen merely to what He says, but know Him—then from Him I may project the lines into the vastness of eternity, and they will include the fact of God. As Charles Wesley dared to put it in one of his most magnificent hymns, in Him we see "God contracted to a span"; and that in order that we may see, that we may know, that we may understand.

Our study of the teaching of Christ concerning God must be imperfect, because in His words His final teaching about God is not contained. Nevertheless, in the words we have found revealed the facts, of the sovereignty of God Who is Spirit; of the nearness of our relationship to God as Father; of the perfection of His method, in that He is the Lord, Author of a law of love, Himself becoming what His people need, in order to help them to become.

The ultimate unveiling of God is to be found in the One Who spoke; Who is infinitely more than all the words that ever passed His lips; because He is Himself the Word of God

[1] John xvi. 28. [2] Matt. xi. 27. [3] John xiv. 9.

II. CONCERNING HIMSELF

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."—*Matthew ix. 13.*

"No one knoweth the Son, save the Father."—*xi. 27.*

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death."—*xxvi. 38.*

"The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."—*xxvi. 45.*

. . . . . .

"For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—*Mark x. 45.*

"But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."—*xiii. 32.*

. . . . . .

"I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent."—*Luke iv. 43.*

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head."—*ix. 58.*

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."—*xix. 10.*

. . . . . .

"And no man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life."—*John iii. 13–14.*

"My Father worketh even until now, and I work."—*v. 17.*

"Even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will."—*v. 21.*

"I came forth and am come from God."—*viii. 42.*

"Before Abraham was, I am."—*viii. 58.*

"We must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."—*ix. 4.*

"I and the Father are One."—*x. 30.*

"I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in the darkness."—*xii. 46.*

"He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."—*xiv. 9.*

"I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father."—*xvi. 28.*

II

CONCERNING HIMSELF

We must all recognize the supreme importance of the teaching of Christ concerning Himself. In an address delivered from the Chair of the Congregational Union in 1909, Mr. J. D. Jones of Bournemouth said, "The Question, 'What think ye of Christ?' is critical for the future of Christianity. It is around the question of the Person of Christ that the battle wages. . . . Is He simply the first Christian, or is He the sum and substance of Christianity?"

The enquiry is a pertinent one, and the declaration that we are in the midst of a conflict around the question of the Person of Christ cannot be denied.

In the midst then of such conflict, we turn with keen and reverent interest to the consideration of His teaching concerning Himself.

It is necessary at the outset that we recognize the limitations of our present meditation. We are limited first by the fact that He gave no systematic teaching concerning Himself. He never, upon any occasion, so far as the records reveal—and we have no other means of knowing—addressed the multitudes by way of explanation of His own Person and Being. Neither have we any record of His gathering His disciples about Him, in order that He might tell them all the truth about Himself. On the other hand, it is quite evident that the supreme problem of the men of His age was created by Himself. His enemies and His critics over and over again asked Him for some clear and specific teaching concerning Himself, "Who art Thou?"

—"Whence camest Thou?" His disciples were evidently equally perplexed. Both foes and friends were conscious in His presence of more than they could account for; and were eager to hear His own declaration concerning the mystery of His Being; but He never, by direct and systematic teaching, answered the enquiry either of friends or foes. Indeed, I think it would not be too strong a statement to make were I to say that, according to His own declaration recorded by John,[1] He avoided all such teaching. On the other hand, it is impossible to read the words of Jesus, as they are recorded for us in these four narratives, without seeing quite clearly that the implications of His teaching constitute a revelation of His Person.

We are also limited in this study by the fact that from His references to Himself we shall select, for our present use, only those which are essential and inclusive.

I propose therefore, first, to group certain of His statements concerning Himself, in which statements He made use of revealing terms; and secondly, therefrom to make a deduction of values.

First then, let us gather from the mass of material at our disposal in the four Gospels certain outstanding statements of our Lord. These we shall group under three headings: first, passages containing terms of existence; secondly, passages containing terms of relation; and thirdly, passages containing terms of purpose. In the light of these passages we shall see something of what our Lord taught concerning Himself; as to the mystery of His Being, as to His relationship both to God and man, and as to the meaning or purpose of His presence in our world.

We then take first the Scriptures which contain terms dealing with the fact of His existence. Certain things Christ said of Himself, either in formal declaration, or incidentally,

[1] John v. 30–38.

reveal His self-consciousness, as apart from His relationship, either to God or to man. These again may be grouped under two headings. In certain passages He spoke out of an eternal consciousness; or I should prefer to change the word eternal, and adopt that which is its equivalent, but which far better conveys the real meaning of the New Testament word; He spoke out of an age-abiding consciousness. In other passages there are terms which reveal His temporal consciousness; or terms which show that He was speaking, as of the age in which He lived, and as conscious of its limitations.

I have selected, rather by way of illustration than in any attempt to exhaust the theme, three passages in which I find the terms of eternity, the age-abiding terms. Let us first read them. I shall quite deliberately lift these passages out of their context, in order that we may consider them in their loneliness. This is not to do any violence to them, because the context in no way modifies their meaning in this application.

These then are the three passages:

"I came forth, and am come from God." [1]

"Before Abraham was, I am." [2]

"I came out from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father." [3]

Almost all the great declarations of Christ revealing His eternal consciousness, and concerning His relationship to God, are found in the Gospel according to John. Bishop Westcott said of this Gospel, "The Gospel of St. John from first to last is a record of the conflict between men's thoughts of Christ, and Christ's revelation of Himself."

The first of these statements, "I came forth, and am come from God," [4] is a most remarkable word, not describing a fellowship of nearness with God, but one which is essential. The real suggestion of the declaration, "I came forth from

[1] John viii. 42. [2] *Ibid.*, viii. 58. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 28. [4] *Ibid.*, viii. 42.

God," is not that He came from the side of God, from companionship with God, as an angel might; but that He came out of the essential mystery of the Being of God.

The declaration, "Before Abraham was, I am," was introduced by that formula of which He occasionally made use when desiring to fasten attention upon a subject: "Verily, verily." This moreover was a direct and intended contrast on His part between the temporal and the eternal. "Abraham *was*"; that is a term of the temporal; but before that, "I am," which in that contrast becomes distinctly a term of the eternal.

In the last of these three passages we have a perfect summary of the whole mission of Christ as recorded in the Gospels, ". . . from the Father . . . into the world . . . leave the world . . . unto the Father."[2]

It is impossible, and unnecessary for us to consider fully the value of these words separately. The fact to be observed is that our Lord referred to Himself in such a way that the implication of His references is that of an age-abiding existence. It is important that we notice the persistence of the Ego, of the "I," of the Person, through these passages: "*I* came forth, and am come from God"; "Before Abraham was, *I* am"; "*I* came out . . . am come into . . *I* leave . . . and go unto."

Herein is no definite or systematic declaration or claim of preëxistence; and yet herein is the consciousness of a persistent existence; or the vapourings of a diseased mind; or the false claims of an impostor. The Ego is persistent; existing before the coming, or there could have been no coming; present in the world, and evidently set forth before the eyes of men in guise suited to their ability to appreciate; and about to leave the world, but not to cease to be. These are the eternal terms, the age-abiding terms, in which He

[1] John viii. 58. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 28.

spoke of Himself; and the inevitable implication is that of an eternal, or an age-abiding consciousness.

Turning next to those terms of existence which were purely temporal; those references to Himself which indicated His relation to the conditions of the age in which He spoke; and which mark His sense of the limitations of time and locality, and His sense of the common experiences of humanity, we will group seven such passages, indicating in each case the particular sense suggested.

The first two indicate His sense of the limitations of time and locality: "We must work the works of Him that sent Me, *while it is day:* the night cometh, when no man can work." [1] That was the sense of time.

"I must preach the good tidings of the Kingdom of God *to the other cities* also: for therefore was I sent." [2] That was the sense of locality.

The next five reveal His sense of the common experience of men: "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." [3] That was the sense of limited knowledge.

"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the heaven have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." [4] That was the sense of poverty.

"No one knoweth the Son, save the Father." [5] That was the sense of loneliness.

"My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." [6] That was the sense of sorrow.

"The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." [7] That was the sense of human weakness.

From these illustrations, which can easily be changed or

[1] John ix. 4.
[2] Luke iv. 43.
[3] Mark xiii. 32.
[4] Luke ix. 58.
[5] Matt. xi. 27.
[6] *Ibid.*, xxvi. 38.
[7] *Ibid.*, xxvi. 45.

multiplied, we may recognize that His common speech concerning Himself was that of One sharing in every way in the conditions of His age, and the experiences of humanity. Thus we find declarations, formally made, or incidentally falling from His lips, which reveal the consciousness of a Being both superior to His own age, and subsisting in all ages; and therefore ageless, timeless, age-abiding, eternal. And we find that He was conscious also of the limitations of time and space; that He did not know the day or the hour; that He knew poverty, that He knew loneliness, that He knew sorrow, that He knew weakness; all the things of one age, its limitations and its human experiences.

Passing now to the Scriptures which contain the terms revealing the fact of His relationships, these may also be grouped under two heads: those revealing His relation to God, and those showing His relation to men.

Those revealing His relation to God are found in the Gospel according to John. His consciousness of relation to God is revealed as twofold: a consciousness of relation as to nature, and a consciousness of relation as to activity.

There are two great words revealing His consciousness as to nature: "I and the Father are one." [1] "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." [2]

There are also two words revealing His consciousness as to activity: "My Father worketh even until now, and I work." [3] "As the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will." [4]

Our present interest centres not in the connection of these words, important though it is, but in the actual declarations. Notice the two affirmations concerning His conscious relationship to God as to nature. "I and the Father are one." [5] That is a solemn and separate claim in which

[1] John x. 30. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 17. [5] *Ibid.*, x. 30.
[3] *Ibid.*, xiv. 9. [4] *Ibid.*, v. 21.

every single word, properly considered, is full of value and suggestiveness; and it is well that we should notice the effect produced by these words upon the Jews who first heard them, for as we observe that effect, we shall discover their understanding of His meaning. "The Jews took up stones again to stone Him;" and that, as they said, "because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God."[1] So it is impossible to misunderstand their interpretation of our Lord's meaning. They knew that it was a word in which He claimed essential and absolute unity and identity of nature with God Himself. In other words, it was a claim to absolute Deity; and there can be no escape from it; there is only one way to be rid of it, and that is to blot it out, and to deny that He said it. If we retain it, we must worship Him; or else declare that these were the vapourings of a disordered mind, or the words of the most terrible impostor the world has ever heard. "I and the Father are one." Nothing can be clearer.

Equally clear, and yet slightly different in application, was the word spoken to Philip; but here again it is impossible to mistake the meaning in the light of the context. "Show us the Father," said Philip, "and it sufficeth us." "Have I been so long with you, and dost thou not know Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."[2] Some declare that the first words may be used by any man, "I and the Father are one." Is any man prepared to say the same of the second, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father"? Linking the two together we have our Lord's definite claim to a relationship with God, which is that of identity of nature, and absolute though mysterious unity of Being.

Then notice the declarations in which He revealed His relationship to God in activity. "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."[3] Once again, ere we suggest any interpretation of the meaning of these words, it is well to

[1] John x. 31, 33. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 8, 9. [3] *Ibid.*, v. 17.

observe the effect produced upon the men who listened to them: "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only brake the Sabbath, but also called God His own Father, *making Himself equal with God.*"[1] Our Lord's declaration in these words was that His relationship to God as to activity was that of cooperation. God was at work in the midst of human suffering and limitation, moving forward towards healing and restoration; and He was cooperating with Him in that very work; and moreover He explained His own claim in the second declaration, "Even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will."[2] This, He said in effect, is the teaching contained in the man's healing by the pool; this is God's act; He gives life to the dead, renewal to the impotent. Thus Christ claimed that in the very works He wrought He was coöperating with God, and that His work was the Divine work, of recreation and regeneration.

But now turn to the terms of His relationship to men. This He expressed through all His ministry by the almost persistent use of one particular title to describe Himself; namely, that of "the Son of Man."

The term, "the Son of Man," occurs in Matthew thirty-two times, in Mark fifteen times, in Luke twenty-six times, and in John twelve times. In the first three Gospels the title is always recorded as having been used by Christ of Himself, and never by angel, by man, or by demon. Of the twelve occasions in John, ten are from the lips of Christ; twice only was the expression used by men, and then in the spirit of criticism and unbelief: "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?"[3] Those are the only two occasions in all the Gospels where the term is found upon the lips of

[1] John v. 18. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 21. [3] *Ibid.*, xii. 34.

any but Christ. The term Son of Man was never used by angel or demon or man except upon this occasion. It is Christ's own description of Himself, and it is the term that links Him to humanity, shows His intimate and positive relationship to the human race.

For particular illustration I take the story of the temptation, where the Lord is seen standing entirely upon the level of humanity. He was in the wilderness, being tempted as man, as representative man; and that is not my view merely, it was His own statement. In answer to the first temptation He said: "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone."[1] That is to say, in effect, I am in this wilderness on the human level, as the Son of Man taking the place every other man has to take; and I obey the law of God that conditions the life of humanity. In answer to the second temptation, He said: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve;"[2] and thus He put Himself within the Divine limitation of every other human life, and declared that He was living according to the law which every other man must obey if he would come to the fulfillment of his life. In answer to the third of these temptations, He said: "It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."[3] Thus He declared that the law which governed Him was exactly the same as that which governed other men. Therefore the terms that indicate His relationship to men are those that prove His absolute kinship with the human race, His complete identification with human experience.

Finally, let us examine the terms which reveal the meaning and purpose of His presence in manifested form in human history.

These deal with the Mission, and the Method.

In dealing with the Mission we propose to take one cen-

[1] Luke iv. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 8. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 12.

tral and illuminative statement from each evangelist. It will be understood that these passages are only illustrative. The supreme and almost overwhelming difficulty in this whole study is the mass of material. In examining these state ments we must be very careful to interpret the "I" in each case by the matter we have considered; and we must be careful to understand the declaration, "I came," in the light of that revelation of personal consciousness of Being, which we have also considered.

"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." [1]

"For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." [2]

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." [3]

"No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man, which is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have age-abiding life." [4]

What a grouping of declarations is here! How absolutely they are fitted to the atmosphere in which they are found! In Matthew, which is the Gospel of the Kingdom, we have the dignity of the eternal King in the "I came," and immediately the picture is that of this King seeking to save sinners. In Mark, which is the Gospel of the Servant, and in Luke, the Gospel of the Man, we have the term "the Son of Man," identifying Him with humanity, linked with the verb that marks His eternal consciousness, "came." In the Gospel of John, the Gospel of His essential Deity veiled in flesh, we have the strange merging of the human and the Divine: "No man hath ascended into heaven, but He that descended out of heaven, even the Son of Man,

[1] Matt. ix. 13.
[2] Mark x. 45.
[3] Luke xix. 10.
[4] John iii. 13, 14.

which is in heaven"; and then the declaration that the Son of Man must be lifted up that "whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life"—that is, age-abiding life, which is the life of the Son of Man, in the essential fact of His being.

There is no systematic teaching here as to His purpose, but the doctrine is quite clear. The first declaration, the one chronicled by Matthew, was made in answer to the criticism of the Pharisees, uttered on account of His familiarity with publicans and sinners. He said in effect, I am in the world to seek these very people, and not to seek you if you are righteous men! I came to give these men repentance. The declaration recorded by Mark was in correction of His own self-seeking disciples, who wanted thrones of power: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The declaration found in Luke was made in answer to criticism because He had accepted the hospitality of Zacchæus, and in order to explain the transformation wrought in the man which made him disgorge his ill-gotten wealth, and return it to the poor. He said the Son of Man came to do that very thing—to seek and to save the lost. The declaration recorded by John was made to an inquirer who sought Him in the silence and hush of the night, and asked how could any man have new life, and be born again. To him Jesus said that the Son of Man, Who is in Heaven, and descended out of it, and is here, must be lifted up, and so His life will be liberated that others may share it.

Thus, in august and marvellous simplicity, He unfolded the purpose of His presence in the world; the presence in the world of the One Whose consciousness was eternal and temporal, Whose relation was with God and with man, in each case in complete, though mysterious, identity.

In other Scriptures we have a revelation of His method the fulfillment of the mission. His method as to God was

that of submission and coöperation. The first was suggested by His recorded words, "I must be about My Father's business."[1] The second was declared in the word already used in another application, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work."[2]

His method in regard to men was that of revelation and redemption. He was in the world for revelation: "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me may not abide in the darkness."[3] He came for redemption: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what do I desire, would that it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished."[4] Reverently expressing the thought in other words, He said, I am here not merely for revelation of light; I am here for redemption, and that can only be provided by death.

This is a hasty, and, in view of the wonder of the teaching, an unsatisfactory grouping of the recorded statements. In briefest sentences, therefore, let us attempt a deduction of values from this teaching of Christ concerning Himself.

He claimed a supernatural existence—that is, an existence indefinable by the terms applicable to man, considered merely as the crown of creation. Supernatural is an awkward word; it will become obsolete when we have more light. If we could climb to the height where God dwells, things we call supernatural would be perfectly natural; but using the word in our ordinary sense, Christ claimed to be other than the men by whom He was surrounded. He claimed prior existence, in that He said He was, before He came. He claimed infinite existence, in that while He was yet present in the limitations of time and space, He spoke of being in the bosom of the Father, and in heaven itself. He claimed indestructible existence, in that while He spoke

[1] Luke ii. 49.
[2] John v. 17.
[3] *Ibid.*, xii. 46.
[4] Luke xii. 49, 50.

of laying down His life, He declared that He would take it again, and that no man could destroy it.

He also claimed a natural existence—that is, an existence definable by the terms applicable to man as the crown of creation. He claimed to live as a man; in subjection to God; limited in knowledge and in power; finding all-sufficient resource in God for the accomplishment of the will of God.

He claimed, moreover, that He was in the world for the express purpose of saving men, and restoring a lost order; and He explicitly declared that this purpose could not be fulfilled save by His death and resurrection; and that in the accomplishment of death and resurrection He was working in the will of God and in coöperation with Him.

It will be recognized that this study is intensive rather than extensive. We might consider the teaching of the Lord concerning Himself as the Revealer of the Father in a series of studies based upon His outstanding declarations in the Gospel of John. Or, on the other hand, we might consider the teaching of the Lord concerning Himself as the Redeemer of men, based upon outstanding declarations of His ministry as recorded by all the evangelists.

These, however, do not come within the scope of our present intention. We have simply attempted to grasp the bare outline of His teaching concerning Himself. We desire to find Christ according to His own estimate; and we most fittingly close our study and express our conviction in the words of the great apostle when he wrote to Timothy:

> "And confessedly great is the sacred secret of godliness,
> Who was made manifest in flesh,
> Who was declared righteous in spirit,
> Was made visible unto messengers,
> Was proclaimed among nations,
> Was believed on in the world,
> Was taken up in glory."[1]

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16. (Rotherham's Translation.)

III. THE SPIRIT

"It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."—*Matthew x. 20.*

"But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you."—*xii. 28.*

"Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."—*xii. 31, 32.*

"Go ye therefore, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."—*xxviii. 19.*

. . . . . .

"Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."—*Mark iii. 29.*

"David himself said in the Holy Spirit, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet."—*xii. 36.*

"And when they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost."—*xiii. 11.*

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned."—*xvi. 16.*

. . . . . .

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"—*Luke xi. 13.*

"And every one who shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven. And when they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and the authorities, be not anxious how or what ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Spirit shall teach you in that very hour what ye ought to say."—*xii. 10–12.*

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—*xii. 49, 50.*

"And behold, I send forth the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high."—*xxiv. 49.*

. . . . . .

"For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."—*Acts i. 5.*

"But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—*i. 8.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born anew. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."—*John iii. 5–8.*

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life."—*iv. 14.*

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believed on Him were to receive: for the Spirit was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified."—*vii. 37–39.*

"And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth: Whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you. Yet a little while, and the world beholdeth Me no more; but ye behold Me: because I live, ye shall live also. In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you."—*xiv. 16–20.*

"These things have I spoken unto you, while yet abiding with you. But the Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, Whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said unto you."—*xiv. 25, &c.*

"But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of Me: and ye also bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."—*xv. 26, 27.*

"Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you. And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye behold Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He taketh of Mine, and shall declare it unto you."—*xvi. 7–15.*

"Jesus therefore said to them again, Peace be unto you: as the Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose soever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven unto them; whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."—*xx. 21–23.*

III

THE SPIRIT

Any one thus tabulating the words of Christ concerning the Spirit, as they are recorded by the four evangelists, will be inevitably impressed by certain facts which need to be stated as introductory to our study.

First there is no systematic instruction concerning the existence of the Spirit; but nevertheless there are certain assumptions, revealed in references to the Spirit, which sufficiently indicate our Lord's thought in this matter.

Secondly, in our Lord's public ministry His references to the Holy Spirit, while comparatively few, were nevertheless awe-inspiring and arresting.

Thirdly, on the eve of His departure He gave to the inner circle of His disciples comprehensive teaching, not on the existence or nature of the Spirit, but concerning the work of the Spirit during the Christian era.

The material at our disposal, then, in these Gospel narratives, for discovering the teaching of our Lord, is first, the references during His public ministry; and secondly, the particular teaching given to His own disciples prior to His departure.

Bearing in mind the first of these three facts, namely, the absence of systematic teaching concerning the nature of the Spirit, we will examine, first, the general teaching of His public ministry; and secondly, the particular teaching of the Paschal discourses.

The words in the former class were spoken not at one time, nor systematically; but at different times, and incidentally, in the course of our Lord's public ministry.

An examination of the fourfold Gospel narrative shows that Matthew recorded four references by Christ to the Holy Spirit, Mark four, Luke seven, and John four. Some of these references of the Lord are recorded by more than one of the evangelists.

Having first set these out as separate statements, in chronological order as far as possible with regard to the ministry of our Lord, we will build thereon our estimate of values.

The first reference to the Spirit in the ministry of our Lord was one revealing the relation of the Spirit to the Kingdom of God, and to the Master's ministry in regard to that Kingdom. This is not the first reference to the Spirit in the narratives, but the first in Christ's own words; and, so far as the records preserve the words to us, this was made in His conversation with Nicodemus. During His first Judæan ministry—a ministry of which we have no record in Matthew, Mark, or Luke; a ministry to which John alone refers—while He was still in Jerusalem, Nicodemus came to Him, a seeker after truth, an honest soul to whom it was possible for Him to speak of deeper things. We are, of course, familiar with the intimate connection between the ending of the second chapter and the beginning of the third chapter in John's Gospel. The last statement of the second chapter is this: "Many believed on His name. . . . But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them, for that He knew all men . . . for He Himself knew what was in man";[1] and the next chapter commences, "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus,"[2] to whom He did commit His heart, and to whom He could speak as to a man of absolute honesty and sincerity. To him, therefore, our Lord declared the relation of the work of the Spirit to the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the heart of man; and ultimately, of course, in the world. He told this man, to

[1] John ii. 23, 24. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 1.

his utter amazement, that no man could enter into the Kingdom save by a new birth, a new beginning; not by process of personal reformation, but by the process of regeneration from above. In that great declaration He made the first recorded reference to the Spirit of God. Man must be born of water and of the Spirit; that is, a man must not only take the step which John indicated in his preaching of repentance; he must also be introduced to the Kingdom, to see it, to be in it, by the regeneration of the Spirit of God.

It is full of interest that in that first recorded reference to the Spirit our Lord not only recognized, but definitely declared, the mystery of the theme. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"; [1] and the "so" links the man who hears the wind to the man who is born of the Spirit. The new-born soul is related to the Spirit precisely as a man is related to the wind which he hears, and the fact of which he knows, but the source and goal of which are hidden from him. He knows the fact though he cannot explain the mystery. Thus upon the very threshold of His public ministry, so far from giving any systematic teaching as to the nature of the Spirit of God, our Lord told this seeking soul, and men for all time, that there is a mystery not revealed; but that there are facts that demonstrate the profounder fact of the being and the activity of the Spirit of God.

Next comes a group of references showing the relation of the Spirit of God to personal life. Of these the first is that to which, in another application, reference has been already made. In the story of the interview with Nicodemus is the word of Jesus concerning the Spirit, which shows that per-

[1] John iii. 8.

sonal Christianity, which is personal realization of the establishment of the Kingdom of God, is the result of the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

The next in order of time occurred just after He had left Jerusalem, and while He was on His way to Galilee to commence the ministry recorded by Matthew, Mark, and Luke. He halted at Samaria; and there, under a figure of speech, He made His next reference to the Spirit, as He said to the woman of Samaria, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life." [1] That this statement referred to the activity of the Spirit is proved by the next reference, where, in interpretation of the figure of the running rivers of water we have the inspired word following, "this spake He of the Spirit." [2]

Thus, under a figure of speech, not by the declaration of a doctrine, but by the suggestion of an illustration, our Lord revealed the fact that when a man is by the Spirit born, the result is that he finds perfect satisfaction; in his life there is no longer the thirst that agonizes for something never found; but the springing, laughing, living water, that brings him perpetual satisfaction.

We find the record of the next reference in the seventh chapter of John, although our Lord said it long after the Galilean ministry, in the second Judæan ministry, and when He was back again in Jerusalem. On the last day of the feast, when the priests were no longer carrying the water in the golden vessels and pouring it forth upon the ground, symbolizing the day of the Spirit, towards the dawning of which the prophets had looked; on the last day of the feast He said, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink." The thought is identical with that of the fourth

[1] John iv. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, vii. 39.

chapter; but He went further now, and said, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." [1] Thus speaking of the Spirit He declared that the true secret of influence in the world is that of the indwelling and outflowing Spirit through the life of man; that influence in the world is to be created by the effluence of the Spirit of God from the life of the man born of the Spirit, and satisfied with the Spirit.

It was then, after the visit to Jerusalem, but still in the second Judæan ministry, while on tour, that He uttered the word, which Luke alone records, in relation to prayer: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" [2]

In that group of references we have His teaching concerning the relation of the Spirit to individual and personal life; that man needs to be born of the Spirit in order to enter into the Kingdom of God; that being born of the Spirit, the Spirit of God becomes in such a man a well of water springing up, and he never thirsts; that the Spirit of God then becomes through him the rushing of rivers of water, fertilizing deserts, and satisfying the thirst of other people; and finally that the Spirit of God is given to a man who asks for Him.

In the next place we have a group of references showing the relation of the Spirit to Christ's own work. The first is a word which He spoke in the midst of the Galilean ministry. It is chronicled by Matthew. He was arguing with the Pharisees. They had said that He cast out devils by Beelzebub, and He replied, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you." [3]

[1] John vii. 37–38. [2] Luke xi. 13. [3] Matt. xii. 27, 28

In that word, which was incidental, it is perfectly clear that our Lord intended to declare that all His activity in the interests of the Kingdom of God, in the exorcism of devils, was activity in coöperation with the Spirit.

Then in that great soliloquy of Luke, a soliloquy that broke from His heart in the midst of the second Judæan ministry, He declared His purpose in the words: "I came to cast fire upon the earth." [1] In the light of other Scriptures we know that this was a declaration that the ultimate meaning of His ministry was, in some way, not then to be disclosed to men, not then to be explained, for men could not understand; but in some way to give the Spirit of God, and make Him available to all men, as a fire for purity, as a fire for energy; but He declared that He was unable to fulfill that greater mission until He Himself had passed through the passion-baptism towards which His face was set, and without which His work could never be completed.

In a passing allusion He declared that when David wrote his psalm long ago, he wrote in the Spirit; that in the psalm, which the rulers and interpreters of the age were unable to explain, the psalm in which David spoke of Messiah and said, "The Lord said unto my Lord," [2] he wrote in the Spirit. To whom was he referring? said Jesus; and they replied, To Messiah, to Christ; and His question to them was, "David himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He his Son?" It was His challenging question to these men as to His own Person. They could give Him no answer. Thus here Christ referred to the action of the Spirit long before as inspiring the prophetic songs that set forth the fact of His own Person, and the meaning of His own ministry.

Going back now to the Galilean ministry, we find that in Galilee He first uttered those words of solemn warning in which He declared that the blasphemy against the Holy

[1] Luke xii. 49. [2] Mark xii. 36, 37.

Spirit is the sin that has no forgiveness. These words we can never read without an almost appalling sense of awe possessing the soul. Both Matthew and Mark record that declaration of Christ in Galilee, and Luke states that He repeated this warning in the course of the second Judæan ministry.[1] Thus the solemn words,—whatever their import may be,—concerning the Spirit of God, belong both to the early Galilean ministry, and to the later Judæan ministry; and in each case were uttered in close connection with that criticism of the Pharisees in which they tried to account for the action of the Lord as being due to the influence of devils. Our Lord did not say that these men had committed the unpardonable sin, but they had approached very near; for when a man says of such a Christ that He works by the power of Satan, he is coming very near to definite and final rejection of that Christ; and such rejection is the sin against the Holy Ghost, because the ministry of the Holy Spirit is that of cooperating with Christ in the casting out of devils, in the revelation of the Father, in the establishment of the Kingdom, by the remaking and the perfecting of men. And if a man shall resist that Christ, and refuse Him, that is the one and only sin that has no forgiveness; for, as Christ said, it is eternal sin, the age-abiding sin, the sin from which there can be no escape; the sin therefore which cannot be forgiven.

Then there is another group of Scriptures, showing the relation of the Spirit to the work of the disciples. Three times over, once in the Galilean ministry, and finally in the last visit to Jerusalem itself, our Lord said practically the same thing to His disciples. He told them that in the day of persecution, when they should be arraigned and imprisoned and beaten and buffeted even to death, they were never to be anxious about their defense; for, said He, the Spirit of your Father within you shall speak, the Spirit of

[1] Matt. xii. 31, 32. Mark iii. 29. Luke xii. 10–12.

God will teach you what to say, the Spirit of God will speak through you.[1]

Then we have a group of references after the resurrection. In every phase of His great commission to His disciples there was some reference to the Spirit. Mark, Luke, and John tell the story of the events of the first day of resurrection in the upper room. The commission recorded by Matthew was uttered in Galilee long after, at a private gathering of the risen Lord with the saints. Each teaches us some phase of the commission. Mark recorded His words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved";[2] and the baptism is of course the baptism of the Spirit, and not of water. Water baptism is the sign and symbol of the spiritual fact; but the regenerating baptism is that of the Spirit. John wrote of that anticipative breathing when our Lord said, "Receive ye the Spirit,"[3] in order to the ministry which shall bring the forgiveness of sins to men. It was a prophetic breathing; they did not receive the Spirit of God then, for Luke tells how, immediately following, our Lord told them to tarry until the Spirit came; and in the final word in Luke we find the promise of the coming of the Spirit.[4]

Then in Matthew's account of the appointed meeting in Galilee we have our Lord's reference to the Spirit in the great commission, when He said, "Baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost";[5] thus by reference to the Spirit indicating the union of the Spirit with the Father and the Son.

Once again, forty days after resurrection, two other references to the Spirit are found in Acts,[6] showing the relation of the disciples to the Spirit, and the Spirit to the disciples for work. He promised the baptism of the Spirit "not

[1] Matt. x. 20. Mark xiii. 11. Luke xii. 12.
[2] Mark xvi. 16.
[3] John xx. 22.
[4] Luke xxiv. 49.
[5] Matt. xxviii. 19.
[6] Acts i. 5, 8.

many days hence"; and then declared that the coming of the Spirit to them would bring them power for the accomplishment of His work.

Thus we have seen, by the grouping of these references of Christ under different headings, that our Lord revealed the relation of the Spirit to the Kingdom of God, the relation of the Spirit to the personal life of the individual, the relation of the Spirit to His own work, and the relation of the Spirit to the work of His disciples immediately, and to the end of the present dispensation.

Looking back over these passages of Scripture it is again evident that there was no attempt on the part of the Lord at systematic teaching. That in itself is a matter of supreme importance. It is a dangerous thing in doctrinal teaching to argue from silence. Yet there is a value in observing the things about which Christ said practically nothing. When we find Him silent on some great matter we may be content to be silent on that subject too. We are always in danger of losing the supreme value of this whole fact of the ministry of the Holy Spirit when we are eager and anxious to state systematically, or even theologically, all the facts concerning the Spirit of God, and the relation of the Spirit of God to the Trinity; topics on which no final word can be said. And it is infinitely better that we should ever abide in this matter where Christ left the subject, for on the subject of the nature of the Spirit of God He made no advance upon that first mystic, suggestive, and beautiful word spoken to Nicodemus: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth."[1] The fact we know, but all the mystery of it we do not know, nor can we! But knowing the fact, we postpone, at least for the present, the attempt to understand the mys-

[1] John iii. 8.

tery, and obeying the fact we find the great force serving our purpose, and accomplishing our end. Is that not the law of the wind? Dr. Jowett, when he wanted to preach upon this very passage, went down to Tynemouth, and sat by an old sailor, a real *sailor*, a man who had spent many years upon a sailing vessel; and said to him, "Do you know anything about the wind?" "Yes, sir, I know a lot about the wind." "Well, will you explain to me the phenomenon of the wind?" "I don't know what you mean, sir." "Well, how do you explain the wind: what do you know about it?" "No, sir, I don't know anything about the wind; but I know the wind, and I can hoist a sail!" That is the whole philosophy of this teaching. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof"—we know the fact; "but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth"—that is the mystery; but knowing the fact we hoist the sail, and the fact becomes the force that drives our vessel across the lake, though when we get to the other side we know no more about the mystery of it than we did when we started; but our vessel has been carried over; "so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The man born of the Spirit comes to recognition of the blowing of the wind, a voice in the soul, a vision before the eye, a new touch of power upon the life; and, in effect, he says, Whence, I cannot tell; whither, I know not; what, I cannot discover; but I will hoist the sail; I will act upon the impulse suggested; and immediately the force of the Spirit enters into the life, and presently he arrives at the desired haven, because recognizing the mystery, and knowing the fact, he has been obedient to the law of the fact, and the fact has been a force coöperative with his life. To my own mind, that great silence of Jesus, that recognition of mystery, is in itself one of the most wonderful things in all His teaching concerning the Spirit.

Yet let us gather these three definite values from this collection of passages: the assumption of the Being of the Spirit; the suggestion of the nature of the Spirit; and the revelation of relationship.

What is this assumption of Being? Jesus assumed the Being of the Spirit of God, and the terms of His references preclude our imagining that He thought only of an influence. Listen to His terms: "The Spirit of your Father."[1] That may leave us a little in doubt. Listen again: "The Spirit of God";[2] and even there we may imagine that there is nothing very definite. But listen again: "The Spirit";[3] and that word was used in such connection as to leave no possibility of doubt that He was thinking of a Person; He was thinking of intelligence, of emotion, and of volition, and therefore of the sum and substance of these things, which is personality. His references to the Spirit were references always to activities; the regenerative activity, by which a man is born from above; the gift of speech, by which men take no trouble to make a defense, but have words to speak given them at the moment; the activity of exorcism, whereby through the word of Christ the devil is compelled to leave a man, and the man is healed, and that for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. Christ spoke of the Spirit by such terms as recognized His Being as a Person, and as One active in the universe of God.

These references of Christ also suggest the nature of the Spirit. He spoke of "*The* Spirit," and that suggests the nature. Does it also present a difficulty? Can any one define Spirit? Let us simply say as we did in considering our Lord's declaration that God is Spirit; that Spirit is freedom from the limitations of space and time. That is at least a hint as to nature.

But He also spoke of "The Spirit of God"; and in our

[1] Matt. x. 20. [2] *Ibid.*, xii. 28. [3] *Ibid.*, 31.

Lord's use of the word "God," is the thought of might, or majesty, of absolute supremacy, and final sovereignty; and when He said "The Spirit of God," it is evident that He thought of the Spirit as related to these attributes. That again is a gleam of light upon the nature of the Spirit.

But once again He spoke of "the Spirit of your Father." In our study on the teaching of Christ concerning God, we pointed out that He only used two names of God definitely; one *God*, and the other *Father;* and hence the meaning and value of the Pauline and Petrine expression, "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now notice that in reference to the Spirit He used the same two words in order to give us an idea of the nature of the Spirit: the "Spirit of God," and the "Spirit of the Father." So that everything we think of, when we think of God as God, we may bring over into our thinking concerning the nature of the Spirit: all the ability to sustain, all the tender solicitude for welfare, all thought of love and passion and strength which we conceive as in God, we may think of as in the Spirit of God.

However, our Lord's favourite designation, if we may judge by the number of times He made use of it, was "The Holy Spirit." He clearly thought of the Spirit as holy in nature; the Spirit of purity and of right, the Holy Spirit.

These references do not constitute systematic teaching; they only afford suggestions, but they are suggestions which, when gathered together, and allowed to create an impression upon the mind, bring us very near to an understanding of the nature of the Spirit. "The Spirit of God"; "The Spirit of the Father"; "The Holy Spirit."

And finally, these references are a revelation of relations. They show that the Spirit is one with God, in His Being, and in His activity; for they indicate that Christ regarded the Spirit as working with God and for Him; and that He Himself wrought in the power of the Spirit.

These references by our Lord also show that He thought of the Spirit of God as the One Who gives life to men, new life to men, enabling them to see the vision of His glory, communicating to them the virtue whereby they will be able to win the victory, themselves submitted to the King, becoming workers with the King for the bringing in of His Kingdom.

If tempted to say that all this leaves the matter very much in the realm of mystery, remember that we have only been considering the more public and incidental references of our Lord to the Spirit.

We now turn to the special teaching of the Lord concerning the Holy Spirit, given to His disciples. It is necessary that we should recognize that it was special teaching, and that in at least three ways; as to those to whom it was given, as to the time at which it was given, and as to the scope of the teaching itself.

All the words of the Paschal discourses were spoken to the disciples only; and it is a most significant fact that, according to this record, they contain no word concerning the coming or ministry of the Spirit until Judas was excluded from the company. In the early portion of the Paschal celebration he was present. He was even there when our Lord washed the disciples' feet; but ere a word passed the lips of Christ concerning the mission of the Spirit, he had been excluded.

The teaching was special also as to the time at which it was given; these words are among the very last things He said. The shadow of the Cross was most evidently over the feast. The disciples were strangely perplexed and perturbed, utterly unable to understand their Master. This indeed had been so from that hour when at Cæsarea Philippi He had first spoken to them of the Cross. Restlessness was rife so far as they were concerned. He alone was quiet, calm, and dignified.

Finally, the teaching was special in its scope. It was specific teaching on the work of the Spirit in relation to His

own disciples. These special words, spoken to the inner circle, are as devoid of systematic teaching concerning the existence and nature of the Spirit as were the incidental references during the public ministry. Over the whole of these instructions, also, we may write that word "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the voice thereof, but knowest not whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." [1]

Observe also that this teaching was intermixed with other matters, and closely related thereto. These Paschal discourses contain four distinct paragraphs on the coming and work of the Spirit; and it will be helpful to notice at once the setting of these references. During the observance of the Paschal feast our Lord had risen, and had washed the feet of the disciples, instructing them on the duty of love expressed in service. After that Judas was excluded, and the Lord spoke more particularly on the subject of His approaching departure. As He did so He was interrupted; first by the troubled question of Peter, "Whither goest Thou?"; [2] next by the protesting enquiry of Thomas, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; how know we the way?"; [3] then by the great cry of Philip, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." [4] In the course of His answer to Philip, for the first time He promised the Paraclete. [5]

Continuing His discourse, He spoke of the relation of obedience to love, told them how the expression of love to Him was that of loyalty; and in conclusion He again spoke of the ministry of the Paraclete, and immediately gave them His word of peace. [6]

Then leaving the upper room in the midst of the discourses, it is not certain where they went. Some believe that the words concerning the vine were spoken as they

[1] John iii. 8. [2] *Ibid.*, xiii. 36. [3] *Ibid.*, xiv. 5. [4] *Ibid.*, 8. [5] *Ibid.*, 16–17. [6] *Ibid.*, 26–27.

walked over the brook Kidron towards Gethsemane. Others believe that they went specially to the Temple, and that in the silence of the night these words were uttered in the presence of that golden vine which was one of the glories of the Temple. Of these things we are not sure; but it is perfectly certain that under the figure of the vine He spoke to them of the new relationship which presently would exist between them and Himself; and emphasized the possibility of service under the figure of fruit-bearing; and in this connection He again spoke of the Paraclete.[1]

He then told them of trials and persecutions awaiting them, and in that connection uttered His final word about the Paraclete;[2] and then completed His discourse, and uttered the great intercessory prayer. Thus He dealt with their need in the days so rapidly approaching, when He, as to bodily presence, should no longer be with them. He recognized their loneliness; their duty to Him; their coming responsibilities n service; the suffering and persecution that such service and such life would bring; and He linked each of these things with the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Their loneliness was to be cancelled by the coming of the Paraclete. Their duty to Him was to be made possible of fulfillment by the presence of the Holy Spirit. Their fruitfulness in service was to be ensured by the ministry of the Spirit. Their suffering was to be endured in the strength of their fellowship with that Spirit.

There are three things to note in a survey of this teaching: first, to observe the meaning of our Lord's references to the Spirit; secondly, to attend to His special teaching concerning the relation of the Spirit to His own disciples; and finally, to make a deduction of values for our help.

In these discourses our Lord referred to the Spirit in three ways. He spoke of Him as the "Comforter," as "the Spirit of truth," and as "the Holy Spirit."

[1] John xv. 26–27. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 7–14.

Instead of "Comforter" let us employ the anglicized form of the Greek word, Paraclete. He used that term in each one of these declarations, and it is remarkable that these are the only occasions where the word is used in the New Testament, except once when, in the first letter of John, it is used of Christ Himself.

The word in itself is an inclusive and final revelation of all the truth He desired to teach them as to the relation of the Spirit to their lives and ministry, when as to bodily presence He would be unseen.

The word Paraclete simply means, One called to the side of. That opens the way for an understanding of the suggestiveness of the word. It is a word quite common in all Greek literature, but to be found in the Greek version of the Old Testament. In Greek literature its sense is always that of an advocate, that is, one who takes up the cause of another, and defends it.

Whence then came our word "Comforter"? It has been suggested that the word "Comforter" is used in its true, old sense of One Who strengthens. That is rather an apology for, than an explanation of, the employment of the word. Undoubtedly to use it in that sense would be absolutely accurate. But we owe the presence of the word "Comforter" to the Greek Church, which insisted upon it that the great sense of value in our Lord's use of the word was not so much that the Holy Spirit was to come as an Advocate, as that He was to come to console, and in that sense to comfort the souls of the disciples.

Now it is of great importance that we should admit the element of truth in that statement, and yet let us see what this really means. The first time our Lord used the word He coupled with it a very simple word, one of those words we are very apt to hurry over when we are reading, but which gives a key to the situation. He said, "I will pray

the Father, and He shall give you "—not *a* Comforter, but "*another* Comforter."[1] And if, as is so often the case in exposition of this kind, it seems as though we were laying undue stress upon an unimportant word, yet ponder it carefully. The word "another" here is of a particular nature and character. It is *allos*, not *heteros;* and consequently the word *another* does not indicate a different quality, but a similarity of quality, and a distinction of Person. The value of the use of the word "*another*" is that it presupposes a previous Comforter; and thus in His use of the word Paraclete, our Lord suggested that His own work in the case of these men might be designated by that term. He had been the Paraclete. He had been the One summoned to their side. He had been with them; they had been with Him; in fellowship with Him they had seen more deeply into the things of God, they had heard the voices with which they had been unfamiliar until He came and spoke to them; in His presence they had known courage and strength; with Him they had felt that they could dare everything; but their trouble was that He was going. Under these circumstances He said, I will send you *another* Paraclete; Another to stand by your side, Another to take exactly the same place that I have filled in your lives during these past three years, Another to be the Advocate of God with you. I think if we compare the way in which Jesus used the word Paraclete with John's use of it in his letter, we may be helped to an understanding of its value. Said John, "We have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."[2] The risen Christ stands as our Advocate with God in the high places of the heavens; and the Spirit dwells with us as His Advocate, in the life and service of the earth. As Christ pleads the cause of man in heaven, so the Spirit pleads the cause of God on earth. He is the Advocate.

[1] John xiv. 16. [2] 1 John ii. 1.

It has been objected that our word "Comforter" has absolutely no place in the thought of the word Paraclete. I differ from that view entirely. If the thought be that of an advocate, as one who pleads a cause, there is involved in that idea the very essence of comfort. My advocate, in that sense, is the man who has knowledge superior to mine; all of which he places at my disposal, so that I can repose in the things he knows, and remit to him all the questions that would be of difficulty to me. There is in this fact all comfort to me, that the Spirit of God has this as His office; all His knowledge of God is at my disposal, all the will of God He will reveal to me, all the way of God He will manifest to me. That is comfort indeed.

Another descriptive phrase of which the Lord made use was, "the Spirit of truth." Truth is the source from which the Spirit comes to fulfill His ministry; truth is the characteristic of the Spirit Himself; truth is the effort of the Spirit in the life of the believer; truth is the result produced, wherever the soul yields to the ministry of the Spirit. The phrase, *of truth*, suggests truth in its simplicity and its finality. Bengel wrote most impressively about it when he declared that truth is the only fact that cannot be falsified. There may be false knowledge, false hope, false faith, false love, but never false truth. Thus the description, "the Spirit of truth," is the simple and final word, revealing the deepest fact of the character of the Spirit.

He made use of another phrase, "the Holy Spirit," revealing the character of the Spirit, revealing therefore the nature of the inspiration of the Spirit in the life of the soul, revealing also the character of the energy which the Spirit will communicate. The word holy in itself suggests awfulness or distance; and in its use, an awe-inspiring purity.

By these terms, without any attempt at doctrinal statement or systematic teaching concerning the nature of the

Spirit, the Lord revealed at once the new relation of the Spirit to believing souls; and the character of the Spirit Who was coming into such new relationship.

We turn to the special teaching of our Lord; and notice two things, first, that He made a definite promise that the Spirit was to come; and secondly, that He revealed the purpose of the coming.

He promised an advent of the Spirit. Every paragraph refers to this. The Spirit was to be given, the Spirit was to be sent, the Spirit was to come. This use of terms is very difficult to explain. Although we believe in the immanence of the Spirit of God in all life, and that there is a sense in which those terms that indicate space, and time, cannot be used of essential Deity, we are at once confronted by them through all this teaching of Jesus, in which He spoke of the Spirit as being given, as being sent, and as coming. They are figures of speech, and our Lord was referring to the fact that after His departure there would be a new method adopted in the economy of God on the part of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit had not been unknown in human history prior to the coming of Christ. Men had been taught that the Spirit had been specially associated with the cosmos from that hour of restoration which the first page of Genesis records. The restoration of a lost order was accomplished by the brooding of the Spirit over the abyss. In the Old Testament men spoke of the Spirit, and a ministry of the Spirit was constantly referred to. Yet Christ now definitely said to His disciples that there was to be a coming, a sending, a giving. All of which indicated the fact that there was to be a new method of spiritual ministry, resulting from His presence and His work, and contributory to the carrying on of the consciousness of that presence, and the continuity of that work.

He first declared that the Spirit should be given by the

Father, and the word *given* there does not mean sent, but assigned; given by the Father to His disciples in answer to His own prayer. "I will pray the Father, and He shall assign the Spirit to you, that He may be with you forever."[1] Here is the suggestion of a difference from anything that had been revealed in the economy of the Old Testament. There we read of the Spirit clothing Himself with a man, clothing a man with Himself; coming to inspire men for special work, the singing of a song, the weaving of a fabric, the working in gold for the perfecting of the Tabernacle. The suggestion throughout is of special wisdom and illumination and power for special occasions. But now, said Christ, My Father, in answer to My asking, will give you the Spirit to abide with you forever; that is a new method of the Spirit, the *perpetual* superseding the *occasional;* the Spirit no longer to be, in the case of His disciples, One Who came with a flash and a light, a vision and a glory, but One Who remained in close, personal, perpetual relationship.

Then our Lord said that He should be sent by the Father in the name of the Son; a little later He said He should be sent by the Son from the Father; and later still He declared that He should be sent by the Son; and the last reference to the new advent of the Spirit is one that speaks of the Spirit as neither given nor sent, but coming of Himself. These statements seem to be almost mutually destructive. As a matter of fact these very terms about an advent of the Spirit, or a new method of the Spirit in the history of men, involve a sense of sacred and mystic relationships, which we can never finally explain or understand; given by the Father; sent by the Father; sent by the Son from the Father; sent by the Son without reference to the Father; coming of Himself. But whatever the mystery of the method, the fact is patent that our Lord declared to this group of men in these

[1] John xiv. 16.

Paschal discourses that they were approaching a new era of spiritual power, and spiritual relationship, in which the Spirit of God should no longer make Himself known as a Visitor, upon occasion, for a purpose; but that He should be a perpetual Presence, a perpetual Power in the life of believers.

He was perfectly clear, all through these discourses, as to the special purpose of this new method and manifestation. The purpose of the Spirit's advent as regards the Son would be first to make His Presence known. This is taught in the first paragraph. I am going away, your hearts are filled with sorrow, I will not leave you desolate, I will not leave you orphans, I will not leave you lonely. In the first paragraph there is a strange merging of two ideas, I will send another Paraclete. . . . I will come to you; so that the Another would not be Another in the consciousness of the disciples; but Another Who would make them conscious of the fact of the presence of Christ.

The teaching of the second paragraph in this application is that the Spirit would bring to their remembrance His past teaching.

The third paragraph teaches that He would bear witness of Him, that is, explain Him. That declaration is put into close connection with the fact that the world had hated Him, but the Spirit would bear witness of Him, and reveal the truth concerning Him, in the presence of the world's hatred.

The teaching of the fourth paragraph is that the Spirit would make Him the centre of the world's religious consciousness, convicting men of sin, of righteousness, of judgment, all in relation to Himself: "Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to the Father . . .; of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged." Finally the Lord declared that the Spirit would come to glorify Him in His own disciples.

The purposes of the coming of the Spirit as to the dis-

ciples we have already seen incidentally. Let us now state them definitely. He came first to disannul orphanhood, to take away the sense of loneliness, to make desolateness impossible; and all this entirely and only by creating the consciousness of Christ. A great many people are making the supreme mistake of expecting a consciousness of the Spirit; yet that which the Spirit creates is not a consciousness of Himself, but a consciousness of Christ. Upon this the Lord was most explicit from beginning to end; the Spirit shall not speak of Himself, or concerning Himself; so that the test of the measure of our fellowship with the Spirit is not our knowledge of the Spirit, but our knowledge of the Christ Whom the Spirit reveals. He came secondly to recall to the disciples the words of past commandments; thirdly to coöperate with them in their witness to Christ; and finally to guide them into all the truth.

The purpose of the coming of the Spirit as to the world was that of conviction, that is, interpretation, discerning judgment, illumination on the great cardinal matters of religious experience. Wherever there is a true religious experience in the history of a man, these are the cardinal matters: sin, righteousness, judgment; sin as a fact, however it may be explained; righteousness as a great ideal, however unattainable it may be; judgment as a terrific necessity, however much it may be denied. The ministry of the Spirit in the world is to put Christ at the centre of all these cardinal matters of which the world becomes conscious when it comes to religious awakening of any kind. Sin in the presence of the presented Christ becomes refusal to believe in Him: righteousness is demonstrated as possible to men because of the triumph of the Christ; and judgment is revealed as already accomplished by the Christ in His conflict with evil. The Spirit was to come to make these things real in the consciousness of the world.

The Spirit can only fulfill this ministry as the Church is in true fellowship with Him. That also is another value of this whole teaching; but taking for granted that the Church is at the disposal of her Lord to carry the message, and to deliver it, then it is in the power of the Spirit that Christ is demonstrated, and conviction comes to the mind of the world.

Our deduction of values may be briefly stated. The first is that of a new sense of the mystery of the whole subject. And after a careful study of these passages, that which arrests our attention is the strange and mystic sense of trinity in unity. Does the mathematician affirm that this is a contradiction of terms? He is quite right; and yet here it is; a merging of activities, the Son asking, the Father sending; the Son sending, the Spirit coming; and yet a unity of activity, the unseen God revealed in the Son, the Son not known by men, for "no one knoweth the Son, save the Father"; the unknown Son revealed by the ministry of the Spirit. The unseen Spirit exercises a ministry of revelation from the Father through the Son to the disciples; yet never makes Himself the consciousness of the disciples; but centralizing their consciousness in the Christ, through Him they have consciousness of the Father, and know the presence and power of the Spirit.

Secondly, the office of the Spirit is here revealed as that of the Medium of union between the Christ and His people; the Medium of vision whereby they see the Christ as they had never seen Him before; the Medium of energy, enabling them to obey the light as it comes; the Medium of consolation, for by the very strength and purity of His advocacy, constraining to obedience, the heart is filled with a sense of comfort.

The final value is to be found in an understanding of the present fact. Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and He

shall give you another Paraclete, *that He may be with you forever.*" [1] In this connection let us recognize the fact that this word for "pray" is never used save in John's Gospel, and is never used of any prayer other than the prayer of Christ. It is one that suggests familiarity, equality, and perfect right. "I will make request of," reads the margin of the Revised Version; but that does not bring us much nearer the truth. It has been suggested that it might be translated, "I will enquire of the Father"; but even that might convey the idea of some measure of ignorance. The word really conveys the thought of the turning to the Father of One Who asks no gift from Him, but who indicates to Him, in perfect fellowship of purpose and power, the gift that He would bestow upon His people.

When did He pray that prayer? The great intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John immediately follows these discourses; but there is not a single reference to the Holy Spirit therein from beginning to end. The prayer for the Spirit was not a prayer offered definitely, in our sense of praying; it was the prayer of His own triumphant presence in Heaven. So Peter surely understood the word of Christ, when on the day of Pentecost he delivered his first message, and declared when men asked "What meaneth this?" that this outpouring of the Spirit, and the manifestations following thereupon, had resulted from the presence of the Man of Nazareth at the right hand of God, "He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear." [2] The thought of Jesus was that the Spirit would be given in new fashion to men, not in answer to their praying, not because of their worthiness, but as the great gift which He Himself would bestow as the result of the completion of His own mission, and by the way of His passion.

And so the Spirit was given in that new sense, and He

[1] John xiv. 16. [2] Acts ii. 12, 33

has never been withdrawn. The upper room on the day of Pentecost, when the tongues of fire were seen, was not more the shrine of the Spirit than are the places of Christian assembly to-day; and there came to these men a gift no more real and definite than is ours, if we are indeed the Lord's own disciples.

Then let us ever remember that the Spirit is with us; to disannul all orphanhood, to give a clear consciousness of the living Christ, to strengthen for witness bearing, to make strong in the midst of suffering, and to realize within men all the purposes of their Lord.

IV. ANGELS

"The reapers are angels . . . The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."—*Matthew xiii. 39, 41, 42.*

"The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the righteous, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be the weeping and gnashing of teeth."—*xiii. 49, 50.*

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds."—*xvi. 27.*

"See that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."—*xviii. 10.*

"For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven."—*xxii. 30.*

"And He shall send forth His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

"But of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only."—*xxiv. 31, 36.*

"But when the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit on the throne of His glory."—*xxv. 31.*

"Or thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels?"—*xxvi. 53.*

. . . . . .

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man also shall be ashamed of him, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."—*Mark viii. 38.*

"For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as angels in heaven."—*xii. 25.*

"And then shall He send forth the angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven."

"But of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."—*xiii. 27, 32.*

. . . . . .

"For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in His own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels."—*Luke ix. 26.*

"Every one who shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the angels of God: but he that denieth Me in the presence of men shall be denied in the presence of the angels of God."—*xii. 8, 9.*

"Even so, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."—*xv. 10.*

"It came to pass, that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom."—*xvi. 22.*

"For neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels."—*xx. 36.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye shall see the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."—*John i. 51.*

IV

ANGELS

Each of the evangelists has some story or stories to tell of angel ministry in connection with the incarnate Lord.

Matthew records the appearing of an angel to Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, three times; then of how angels ministered to Jesus after the period of temptation in the wilderness; and finally, of the coming of the angel to roll away the stone, not to liberate Christ, but to show that He was already risen; and of his declaration to the two Marys that the Lord was risen, and His charge to them to go and tell His disciples.

Mark significantly only speaks of the ministry of angels after the temptation.

Luke records the visits of Gabriel to Zacharias and to Mary; the appearance of an angel to the shepherds, and of the making of the night full of music with the chorus of the heavenly visitors. He also tells of the coming of an angel into Gethsemane, and of how he ministered to the Man of Sorrows in the hour of His darkness; and finally of how two disciples, walking to Emmaus, reported that certain women claimed to have seen a vision of angels.

John circumstantially describes how Mary, looking into the sepulchre, from which the stone had been rolled away, saw two angels in white, sitting one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

All these references are simple, natural, straightforward, without apology, and without argument. It is impossible to read these stories, and believe in the truthfulness of the men who wrote them, without at least discovering that they

evidently themselves believed in angels; and moreover, that they wrote for those who shared that belief. Their own belief in angels is evidenced by the very naturalness and simplicity with which they told their stories. Their certainty that those for whom they wrote believed in angels is evidenced by the fact that they never argued for the truth of their stories.

When we turn to the words of our Lord for enlightenment on the subject of angels we again find no systematic teaching; but we have such references as set the seal of His authority upon the belief in the existence of angels; and we have such incidental statements as reveal something of their nature, character, and ministry.

In grouping these references chronologically, it is interesting to note that the great majority of them occur in the records of the later part of His ministry. While I am not prepared to set any particular value upon the fact; in all the earlier ministry, He hardly made any reference to angels, as He made hardly any reference to the Spirit. The earlier ministry would seem to have been almost exclusively confined to the enunciation of an ethic, and the revelation of a power equal to the realization of the ethical ideal presented. That however must not be taken as final interpretation of the fact.

One great word concerning angels was however spoken in the very earliest ministry. It is the only reference to angels from the lips of Jesus recorded by John; and yet John was the mystic, the dreamer, the man who in all probability would have seen visions most easily.

This first word was spoken to Nathanael, whom Jesus described as being "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." The very humour and playfulness of that word of Christ will be discovered if we realize that in effect He said, "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no *Jacob*." "An

Israelite indeed," that is, one realizing all that which was the Divine intention for Jacob; and therefore thou shalt see Jacob's dream fulfilled; "the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [1]

That is the reference to angels upon the portal of John's Gospel; a statement made at the beginning of the ministry of Christ; and in itself figurative, symbolic, suggestive, inclusive and final, on the subject of angelic ministry in the new covenant and dispensation which He had come to create.

Then moving chronologically through the ministry of Jesus, the next references are found in the Kingdom parables,[2] wherein He referred to angels as taking part with Him in His final administration of the government of this world, for the establishment of the Kingdom of God. He described their work as that of separating between the tares and the wheat; severing between that which is good and bad when the great drag-net is brought to shore, having all kinds of fishes therein. The angels are to be His ministers, discriminating, dividing, administering, at the end of the age.

Chronologically every other reference to angels was made after Cæsarea Philippi, after the hour in which Peter had made his great confession, and in which the Lord had begun to speak of His coming passion and His coming sorrow. Then the references to angels became more numerous. Let us attempt to gather up the teaching of our Lord under the three heads already mentioned—the nature of the angels; the character of the angels; and principally—for under this head we have more references than under any other—the ministry of the angels.

As to the nature of angels, let it be at once recognized that the references are very few, and that they can only afford some gleams of light. Yet they afford light sufficient for our present need, and for an understanding of

[1] John i. 47, 51. [2] Matt. xiii. 39, 41, 49, 50.

their nature. No reference is of the nature of a definite and systematic declaration; each is but incidental.

The first is that recorded by Matthew, by Mark, and by Luke, when in answer to a Sadducean question as to the resurrection and marriage, our Lord made this statement:

"In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in heaven." [1]

In that incidental statement we have perhaps more light than appears at first. We have our Lord's declaration that angel life is entirely different from human life; in that it is not terrestrial, nor can be; but that it is celestial, and must abide celestial. In other words He thus declared that in angel nature there is neither male nor female, and by that word He denied forever that fantastic and foolish idea that "the sons of God" in Genesis were angels; and made it perfectly clear that in angel-life that inter-relationship, which we know in earthly life as marriage, is non-existent and impossible.

The angels are direct creations of God; each individual one is immediately created by God; and in that sense they are the "sons of God." That sweeps out all the ideas that bring angels at all into kinship with humanity. They are of a different order of being, of an entirely different nature, not to be thought of as we think of men and women to-day. Of course the main point of His teaching in this connection was that, in the life beyond, men and women will have come into the angel realm of life, and share in some sense their nature, but He separated the angels from the earth as to kinship. He showed that the angels are the ministers of God, touching the earth, visiting the earth, interested in the earth; but never of the earth. They are an entirely different order and race of beings; and they are never procreated, but are always the direct creation of God Himself. There is no light upon their nature beyond that.

[1] Matt. xxii. 30.

The mystery is not explained, because it cannot be explained to men in this life. There are things of which we in this present limited life can never come to full comprehension, or know the meaning. This gleam of light does however clearly reveal that they are not terrestrial as man is; but celestial, wholly of the spirit world. This does not mean to say that there is no material side to the being of an angel, for there may be a material which is not of the earth; but it divides between the angels and humanity, and shows that the gulf separating is the gulf of an absolute difference in nature.

Then in one gleam of light in the record of Luke we learn a second thing concerning the angels. As by the three references we have referred to, we have discovered they are not terrestrial; in this statement we learn they are not mortal, but immortal; "neither can they die." [1]

In the letter to the Hebrews this teaching of Jesus is carried out by the writer in relation to the Lord Himself, when he declares that:

"Verily not of angels doth He take hold, but He taketh hold of the seed of Abraham." [2] The reason for this was that by taking human nature He could die. Thus the second fact revealed in the teaching of our Lord about angels is that they cannot die.

In an incidental reference, in the midst of one of the most remarkable things our Lord ever said concerning Himself, we have this final thought concerning their nature; they are not omniscient, they do not know all things, they only know the things revealed to them:

"Of that day and hour knoweth no one, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only." [3]

Here is a distinct declaration that the angels are limited in their knowledge, never to be thought of as infinite, but always finite; created beings, of some heavenly order and

[1] Luke xx. 36. [2] Heb. ii. 16. [3] Matt. xxiv. 36.

type, without dying, and limited in their knowledge, knowing only the things revealed.

The teaching of Jesus as to the character of the angels is revealed in the fact that He only used one adjective concerning them, and that only on two occasions.

He spoke of them as the "holy angels." [1] It may be that His use of the word "holy" on both these occasions was intended to distinguish between the angels to whom He was referring, and other angels that are unholy; the fallen angels. But even if that be so, it does not detract from the positive value of the adjective that He used. He called them holy, using that word which means quite simply, awful; and yet which always stands for the awfulness of sanctity, or separation; and which is always connected with the sanctity or separation of an absolute purity. It is interesting to go through the words of Jesus and see how often He used that word holy, and in what relationship. He used it of His own high ideals, when in the Sermon on the Mount He said: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before the swine." He used it of the Temple by quotation from Daniel, when He described it as "the holy place." He used it perpetually, as we have seen, of the Spirit of God. He used it of God Himself, "Holy Father." He used it of the angels.

These are only gleams of light, but through them I see an order of being; every individual member of the great order created by God; belonging to the things celestial and having no natural contact with the things terrestrial; not mortal but immortal; not knowing all things, but learning, and receiving, and knowing the things revealed; sinless, absolutely pure, awful in their holiness, with the very holiness of God.

We turn now to our Lord's teaching concerning the ministry of angels.

[1] Mark viii. 38. Luke ix. 26.

The first word, as I have already said, is inclusive and comprehensive. We remember that the language is figurative, and yet let us ponder it. He said to Nathanael: "Ye shall see the heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man." [1]

By that word He revealed the fact that He thought of angels as engaged in a perpetual ministry of communion between this earth and the heaven that lies beyond. Every word is figurative; "ascending and descending" is a figurative term, employed to convey great meanings to the mind of men who are necessarily limited by such thoughts as those of ascent and descent. Notice the suggestiveness of this. Angels ascending and descending! The thought of our Lord was in harmony with the thought of the dream of the olden time, and was not that of angels as abiding in their own habitation in the celestial places; but of them as committed to a ministry of service among the sons of men; and then ascending, and bearing up messages to the higher places; not to tell God the things they see, for men live and move and have their being in God; but to convey the story to other intelligences, and to make known to other worlds the facts happening here; and then descending with answers to petitions they have borne away, to bring the ministry of another and a distant world, and the things of a larger and a more infinite life, to touch and help and renew man in the processes of his probationary career.

This word was the ratification of Jacob's dream, and in the august statement our Lord declared that His mission in the world was that of fulfilling the dream of Jacob, and making this ministry of angels no longer occasional, but perpetual.

Is not that what the writer of the letter to the Hebrews meant when he wrote, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall in-

[1] John i. 51.

herit salvation?"[1] Thus we learn from that first reference that angels are now occupied, under the government of God, in the service of humanity.

The next fact we learn is from the next word in order, which declared that the angels are specially committed to the guardianship of children. If you are inclined to speak of it as poetry, I pray you read the words again. It was, on the part of Jesus, not a figure of speech merely. It was a solemn asseveration. He said distinctly, when speaking of the children, of the little ones, that their angels in heaven do always behold the face of the Father. He was suggesting to those who listened to Him the honour conferred upon the angels, in that they have right of access to the immediate presence of God, that their vision of God is clear and unclouded, that they do always behold the face of God. And these angels guard the children. If such honoured beings are set apart by God to watch the children, then how sacred their wards must be:

"See that ye despise not one of these little ones";[2] for their angels have perpetual access to the presence of God, they "do always behold the face of your Father which is in heaven."

I know the age in which we live; I know the spirit outside the sanctuary, the scepticism, the criticism; and that people will say, Do you really believe angels guard the children? I certainly do; for I do not believe we have seen all the facts of life when we have looked into each other's faces. I believe in the ministry of angels, and that for every bairn there is a guardian angel who always beholds the face of God. That is one of my profoundest convictions, because He said so; and I believe it in spite of all that scepticism may say to attempt to shake my conviction.

The next word as to the present ministry of angels we find in that wonderful chapter in which Luke alone has

[1] Heb. i. 14. [2] Matt. xviii. 10.

given us the threefold parable of the lost things: the lost piece of silver, the lost sheep, and the lost son. In the midst of that unveiling of God's heart, our Lord declared that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God; a profounder and deeper thing than telling us that the angels are filled with joy. "In the presence of the angels," in the observation of the angels, in the place where the angels are, there is joy. In all the highest courts of heaven, in the true centre of everything, in God Himself. The angels are mentioned because they become the voices of the heavenly joy; and as o'er the plains of Bethlehem they sang the song of the coming Redeemer, so forevermore they thunder forth in sweetest music the joy of God over bruised and broken men and women, weeping their way back to His heart and to His love. Their ministry, their present ministry is that of the perpetual chorus, the offering of praise in the high places of the universe, whenever men turn home to God. Ah, what fools and blind we are! We did not think much of it that some man recently found his way back out of slum or suburb, out of his desolation and misery and sin to God; but when he came, with the sigh and the tear of agony and repentance, heaven was filled with joy, and the angels voiced the joy of heaven. That is their perpetual ministry.

We learn next from a word of Jesus recorded by Luke that angels become the guides home of the dying. When a man dies, he finds entrance upon another order of life. Dying; what is it? Leaving behind the chance of ever dying. It is a dropping of the robe of flesh, which alone can die, and going out into the new order of life. I can imagine the spirit of a man finding himself just across the border, in the presence of the new reality, full of mystery; filled with the consciousness of loneliness, and of perplexity, knowing nothing of how to proceed. Jesus said that such a man was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom.

"Abraham's bosom" was a Jewish phrase, used to describe the very heart of Heaven, the chief place of joy in the life that lay beyond. And thither, He said, angels bore Lazarus; they met him, conducted him, carried him. I think they still do it. I believe that when our loved ones have just passed where our voices can no longer reach, our eyes cheer, our hands minister; angels welcome them and bear them to some one of the habitations of the blessed, and lead them out in the first pilgrimages of that great and wondrous life that lies beyond.

The final thing He said about their present ministry is full of fire and force and flaming glory. He was in the garden. Peter had blundered by the use of his sword at the wrong place, and at the wrong time. Men were arresting Him, and He said to Peter:

"Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech My Father, and He shall even now send Me more than twelve legions of angels?"[1]

It is a flame of glory, as full of mystery as it is possible to imagine. Twelve legions; twelve, a peculiar Hebrew word, that all His disciples would understand; twelve tribes, twelve apostles, twelve, always twelve; legions, a peculiarly Roman word, six thousand footmen, in addition to cavalry.

Angels, flaming presences of unspotted purity, might have delivered Him, for He

> "maketh His angels winds,
> And His ministers a flame of fire";[2]

and for the purposes of God they can touch and deal with things terrestrial. The marvel of all marvels is that He simply drew the veil, and gave us to see something of the gleaming myriads of angels ready to do the behests of the King, and then chose to remain alone. And if you ask me,

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53. [2] Heb. i. 7.

Why? there is but one answer, "He loved me, and gave Himself up for me."

Then our Lord also described the future ministry of angels; and here perhaps we are in graver difficulty; and yet the words of Jesus are perhaps more circumstantial than in any other application. He declared that He will come again, that He will once again be focused for earthly observation. He Who came will come, and His next coming will be in glory; and the angels will be in attendance in the hour of His vindication. They who have been unseen ministers will be visible attendants upon His glory.[1]

He declared, moreover, that in that hour of judgment, of discriminating justice which the world so sorely needs, He will bring angels to aid Him; from the Kingdom they shall gather out the things that offend, that they may be destroyed, in order that all the things of brightness and glory and beauty may have their full realization.

Thus the teaching of Christ directly affirmed the existence of angels, and gave some understanding of their nature, their character, and their ministry. That teaching was in direct opposition to the Sadducean influence which was powerful in His time. The high priest was a Sadducee. The dominant power was Sadducean; and in Paul's great address, chronicled in the Acts of the Apostles, we find the definition of the Sadducee; he was one who denied resurrection, and angel, and spirit.[2] In the midst of that Sadducean influence and atmosphere our Lord proclaimed, by all these references, His belief in the existence of the angels.

A fuller study of the theme would show the relation of this teaching to the Hebrew past and the apostolic future. That of course does not come within the scope of these meditations. His first word about the angels spoken to Nathanael was linked to the teaching of Jacob's dream; and His last word about the angels, spoken in the garden con-

[1] Matt. xvi. 27. [2] Acts xxiii. 8.

cerning the twelve legions, was linked to the teaching of that wonderful vision in Kings, when Elisha prayed that the eyes of his servant might be opened; and when they were opened,

> "Lo, to faith's enlightened sight,
> All the mountains flamed with light."

Thus our Lord accepted the Hebrew view of the angels; and in doing so, He sealed it as true. When we turn from these Gospels to the apostolic writings, the same truths are maintained. Angels are still referred to as the armies of heaven. It is still declared that they minister to the saints. We see them divided into ranks and orders, and yet united in service; and the worship of angels is emphatically condemned, forbidden.

According to the teaching of Jesus, when we take our way from the sanctuary and into the life of every day, we receive ministries other than material, ministries other than the essentially spiritual; not only fellowship with the Father and with the Son and with the Spirit; but, to aid us in a thousand ways of which we do not dream, the touch of other creations upon our lives, whispers in language we cannot catch so as to repeat it, which has its influence upon us in the hour of danger. I believe in the ministry of angels because our Lord has taught me so to do.

> "They come, God's messengers of love,
> They come from realms of peace above,
> From homes of never-fading light,
> From heavenly mansions ever bright.
>
> "They come to watch around us here,
> To soothe our sorrow, calm our fear:
> They come to speed us on our way;
> God willeth them with us to stay.
>
> "But chiefly at its journey's end
> 'Tis theirs the spirit to befriend,
> And whisper to the faithful heart,
> 'O Christian soul, in peace depart.'"

V. SATAN AND DEMONS

"Get thee hence, Satan."—*Matthew iv. 10.*

"Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."—*vi. 13*

"If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!"—*x. 25.*

"If Satan casteth out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?"—*xii. 26, 27.*

"But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and findeth it not. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."—*xii. 43–45.*

"When any one heareth the word of the Kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the evil one, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown in his heart."

"He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil."—*xiii. 19, 37–39.*

"Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men."—*xvi. 23.*

"Depart from Me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels."—*xxv. 41.*

. . . . . .

"These are they by the wayside, where the word is sown; and when they have heard, straightway cometh Satan, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them."—*Mark iv. 15.*

"Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man."—*v. 8.*

"Jesus . . . rebuked the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him."—*ix. 25.*

. . . . . .

"And those by the wayside are they that have heard; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word from their heart, that they may not believe and be saved."—*Luke viii. 12.*

"I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall in anywise hurt you. Howbeit in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."—*x. 18–20.*

"The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."—*xi. 24–26.*

"Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?"—*xiii. 16.*

"Simon, Simon, behold, Satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat."—*xxii. 31.*

. . . . . .

"Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?"—*John vi. 70.*

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speak eth of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof."– *viii. 44.*

"Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."—*xii. 31.*

"I will no more speak much with you, for the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in Me."—*xiv. 30.*

"Of judgment, because the prince of this world hath been judged."—*xvi. 11.*

V

SATAN AND DEMONS

In the study of the religions of the world, there is perhaps nothing more startling than the discovery of the universal belief in the existence of a dark under-world of spiritual beings in antagonism to all that is highest in man, and to all that makes for his happiness or holiness. Every form of religion, from the fetish worship which is considered the lowest, to the highest conceptions, includes belief in the existence of such forces. The differences between religions in this respect are differences in the attitude of the mind to these spiritual antagonisms; all believing in their existence.

New Testament writers recognized these forces, and gave very definite teaching concerning their opposition to man, his conflict with them, and the way of victory over them. This belief in the existence of such an under-world of spiritual beings in antagonism to man is so closely interwoven with the texture of these Gospel stories that the most casual description of their contents must include some reference to them. Indeed, it is a conspicuous fact that the Incarnation resulted, not only in the manifestation of God, and the interpretation of man; but also in the unmasking of Satan. Whereas in the Word incarnate we have in very deed seen the Father; and whereas in that selfsame Man of Nazareth we have had an explanation of the mystery of our own being; it is equally true that as the result of His presence and His teaching the apostle was able to write long ago concerning the enemy of the race, "We are not ignorant of his devices."

We turn then, with reverent interest, to the teaching of our Lord on this great and confessedly mysterious subject; and in doing so two matters impress us, to which reference must be made by way of introduction; first that here again we have no systematic teaching, no attempt to satisfy curiosity, or to supply knowledge simply in order to make men "wise and understanding," to use our Lord's descriptive words of the men from whom the ways of God are forever hidden. But on the other hand as we read these records, intermixed with the teaching of the Master, we find enough references to this under-world of evil, to yield a mass of material; and to afford very clear conceptions to those who, convinced of the unerring wisdom of the Teacher, listen with the simplicity of babes, in order to know and do the will of the Father.

It is impossible to quote here all the references to the subject in the Gospels. A tabulation of results must suffice, referring to some outstanding and representative words of the Lord, under two headings: first His teaching concerning Satan; and secondly His teaching concerning those whom He described as his angels.

First, then, the teaching of our Lord concerning Satan. The references of Jesus to Satan are too many and too explicit to need any argument to prove His belief in the existence of a spiritual personality of great subtlety, and of great power, who is actively engaged in evil operations producing evil results. No man can deny the personality of Satan without either denying the accuracy of these records, or asserting that Christ was a child of His own age, influenced merely by the opinions of that age, and mistaken. To those who accept Him as the final, infallible, authoritative Teacher, and who believe in the accuracy of the records, no argument is needed as to the personality, or as to the fact of the activity of such a personality in the universe.

Our business is to endeavour to see this being, as Jesus

saw him, and to understand him in the light of His teaching. In doing this we shall notice first the names by which He called him; and secondly the terms by which He defined him. Here again, we have no set discourse on the person of Satan; but in the midst of His teaching, our Lord referred to him, named him, and used certain titles for him which are definitions; and from these names and these titles we gather the teaching of our Lord concerning Satan.

First, then, the names by which our Lord referred to this personality. There were three, and three only; and they were all taken from the Hebrew economy. Each one of them is to be found in the Scriptures of the Old Testament. It is important that we should understand that our Lord came to exercise His ministry as the Hebrew Messiah; and that by all His references to their theology, and to their great religious conceptions, He set the seal of His authority upon them, in so far as they had gone. Each name by which He referred to this adversary was a name perfectly familiar to the ears of His hearers, perfectly well known in the Hebrew economy. The three names are, Satan, the Devil, and Beelzebub.

The word "Satan" was in its first use a title rather than a name; but in the process of the history of Hebrew theology it had become a definite name attached to one person. The simple meaning of the word is adversary; and first of all, adversary in a legal sense; so that in the Old Testament the word is used, not always of a spiritual enemy, and not always of an evil enemy. Job used the word of God Himself, when he described Him as his Adversary; He was his Adversary at law, the One Who was against him. Whether that was a mistake on the part of Job is not now to be discussed. As we take our way through the writings of the Hebrew people, we find that gradually the

name was retained for this one personality, of whom there seems to have been no very definite conception, and no very clear teaching; save that he was a spiritual being, of vast wisdom and tremendous power, who was at war with the purpose of God. Our Lord took that name, and used it in His references to this personality.

He also used the name which we translate as "the devil," the Greek word *diabolos*, which means the traducer, the false accuser; and necessarily in that word there was always the thought and suggestion of evil which was not at first associated with the other word, adversary. Upon two occasions only, our Lord made use of the word by which this being was designated by the Pharisees, Beelzebub. It is a terrible word, Baal, zebub; Baal, the master, zebub, of the flies; that is, the dung-god, the genius presiding over corruption.

To pass in review the occasions upon which our Lord made use of the name Satan; in the hour of His temptation it is recorded that He said to the tempter, "Get thee hence, *Satan*."[1] In His conflict with the Pharisees, when they declared that He was coöperating with Satan in the working of His miracles of exorcism, Christ said, "If *Satan* casteth out *Satan*, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?"[2] In His explanation of the parable of the sower to His own disciples, He spoke of the enemy, saying, "Straightway cometh *Satan*, and taketh away the word which hath been sown in them."[3] In His address to Peter at Cæsarea Philippi, at that parting of the ways in His ministry, He spoke those terrifically solemn words, addressing them to the man, and yet through the man speaking to the personality whom He recognized behind the disciple, "Get thee behind Me, *Satan*: thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things

[1] Matt. iv. 10. [2] *Ibid.*, xii. 26. [3] Mark iv. 15.

of God, but the things of men." [1] In His word to the seventy returned from their victorious mission, He said, "I beheld *Satan* fallen as lightning from heaven." [2] Once, when describing a woman who for long years had been in infirmity He said, "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom *Satan* had bound, lo, these eighteen years, to have been loosed from this bond on the day of the Sabbath?" [3] And at last, amid the shadows of the Passover feast and discourses He uttered that illuminative word, "*Satan* asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." [4]

That is merely a cursory grouping of the occasions upon which it is recorded that our Lord used the word itself. Upon each one of them we might dwell, for all contribute something of light to our understanding of the Lord's conception of the power of Satan; the first recognizing the fact that he is the instrument for tempting the soul of a man; the second realizing the unity of Satan's kingdom in its attack upon the purposes of God; the third realizing his constant activity with regard to the proclamation of the Divine revelation, that wherever possible he it is who steals away from the heart of a man the Word of God; the fourth revealing the whole inspiration of Satanic method in the word to Peter, "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men"; the fifth, putting the whole story of Satan into one great flash of light: "I beheld," and the word *beheld* is a very striking one; it does not refer to the casual sight of something that happened; it is rather a word indicating constant watchfulness, and reveals the Lord's attitude towards Satan. Suggestively, though not in detailed unveiling, that is the history of the genesis and consummation of evil in the universe of God; that was the primal

[1] Matt. xvi. 23.
[2] Luke x. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, xiii. 16.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxii. 31.

fall, when according to Milton, Lucifer, son of the morning, fell as the result of his rebellion against the government of God. Christ said, "I beheld Satan fallen," I know his history, I know his present position, I know the ultimate issue of all his effort, "I beheld Satan," not enthroned, not winning his victory; not triumphing, but fallen as lightning from heaven. In the sixth reference there is one simple incidental revelation of the strange power of Satan over physical conditions; Satan had bound this daughter of Abraham through the long years; and in the seventh there is a wonderfully illuminative revelation of the relation of Satan to the economy of God, "Satan hath obtained you by asking, that he may sift you as wheat: but I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not." Satan is seen as compelled to the ministry of sifting the men of faith; but over against the power of his sifting there is set the advocacy, the intercession of the Son of God Himself; and He spoke in perfect confidence that though he sift, no grain of wheat can be lost, the chaff alone goes. The prevailing intercession of the Saviour is a mightier force than the sifting of the foe.

Of course this is only to touch upon some of the great values of the texts. The outstanding references to Satan are first that at Cæsarea Philippi, in which our Lord said, "Thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men," revealing the very inspiration of evil; secondly that in which He said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven," and thus declared His own attitude towards the enemy; and finally that in which He said, "Satan hath obtained you by asking, that he may sift you as wheat."

There are four recorded occasions on which He spoke of this being as "the Devil." In His explanation of the parable of the sower as recorded by Luke, He said, "Then cometh *the devil*, and taketh away the word from their

heart." [1] When He repeated the parable, according to Matthew, He changed the word, and spoke of "the evil one." In Matthew's account of the explanation of the parable of the tares, or the darnel, He said, "The enemy that sowed them is *the devil*." [2] In His condemnation of His critics, as recorded by John, He used the name: "Ye are of your father *the devil*"; [3] and in that connection, remember what we attempted to insist upon when considering His teaching concerning God, that the word "father" does not essentially mean progenitor.

The real thought of "father" has nothing in it that suggests the origin of being; it is the word that suggests care, watchfulness, attention; and the terrible thought of this passage therefore is that these men were under the care, the watchfulness, the attention of the devil; and if those sacred words, care and watchfulness and attention, seem out of place in that connection, I use them deliberately, for the revelation of Scripture is that of the appalling persistence with which the devil will attempt to encompass the ruin of a soul, and the wreckage of society. In the foretelling of the doom of Satan and his angels, He spoke of an "age-abiding fire prepared for *the devil* and his angels." [4] Once He used the word of a man, when He definitely and distinctly and emphatically declared of Judas, "One of you is a *devil*." [5] It is the only occasion when He said "a devil." In every other case He employed the definite article; but He spoke of Judas as being "a devil," a false accuser, a traducer.

In connection with His conflict with the Pharisees, He twice used the word Beelzebub, quoting it to His disciples when He said, "If they have called the master of the house *Beelzebub*, how much more shall they call them of his household?" [6] and quoting it again when speaking to the

[1] Luke viii. 12.
[2] Matt. xiii. 39.
[3] John viii. 44.
[4] Matt. xxv. 41.
[5] John vi. 70.
[6] Matt. x. 25.

Pharisees, He said, "If I by *Beelzebub* cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?" [1]

Let us now turn to the defining terms of which He made use. These are found in the course of His teaching, and in each case must be interpreted by the context. I group them by the suggestiveness of the context. He used two terms to define Satan in relation to the Kingdom of God; two to define him in his relation to human character; and one to define him in his relation to Himself.

When dealing with the relation of Satan to the Kingdom of God, and its establishment in the world, He used the terms: "the evil *one*," and "the enemy." "The evil one" is sometimes rendered "the evil." In the Revised Version the final petition in the Lord's Prayer is made to read, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one"; the word *one* is italicized, signifying that it does "not appear to be necessarily involved in the Greek" (Reviser's Preface). We still recite it, "Deliver us from evil," and I prefer that form of recitation because I think the petition includes the evil one, and all the results of his activity. But the implication is that we are delivered from the evils which result from the work of "the *evil one*."

When Jesus was explaining the parables of the sower and the tares He said respectively, "Then cometh the *evil one*, and snatcheth away that which hath been sown"; [2] and, "the tares are the sons of the *evil one*." [3]

Thus the term, "the evil one," suggests that Satan is the origin, the fountainhead of evil; and our Lord employed it when dealing with His relation to the Kingdom. The supreme passion of the heart of the Master was that of the establishment of God's Kingdom. Wherever He looked He saw the multitudes without a shepherd, and was moved

[1] Matt. xii. 27.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 13.
[3] *Ibid.*, xiii. 19.
[4] *Ibid.*, xiii. 38.

with compassion. He saw wounds and weariness and want and woe, and His heart was filled with pain; and through the chaos He saw the cosmos; through the disorder, the order of the Kingdom; and His whole work was directed towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the world. On the other hand the evil one was actively engaged in attempting to prevent that consummation; sowing darnel where the Master sowed the wheat.

"The enemy" means, quite literally, the hater, and therefore the one hostile to every purpose of beneficence and of love. In explanation of the parable of the tares, the Lord said, "*the enemy* that sowed them is the devil"; and in His address to the Seventy, "I have given you authority over all the power of *the enemy*."

Thus when our Lord was speaking of His Kingdom, teaching men to pray for its establishment, declaring the method by which the Kingdom purpose would be carried through a particular dispensation, He referred to Satan as "*the evil one*," the origin of the things that hindered; and "*the enemy*," the one who opposes the progress of the King.

The terms of which He made use, when showing the relation of the devil to human character, are found in the Gospel of John. Speaking to men who were opposed to Him, who were criticizing Him, who were willfully blinding their eyes to His work and His word, He told them they were of their father the devil, and used two terms to describe him, as He said "He was *a murderer*," quite literally, a manslayer; and "he is *a liar*," quite literally, a teller of the untruth, the falsifier of that which is true. Thus in the matter of the relation of this personality to human character two terrible facts are revealed; his aim is the destruction of man, and his method is the falsifying of truth.

Our Lord made use of one term only in describing the relation of this person to Himself: "*the prince of this world*."

It is to be carefully noted that the Greek word here translated prince is *archon*, and not *archegos*. *Archon* means simply a ruler, and was the common word used of the rulers of the people. *Archegos* is never used in the New Testament of any person save the Lord Himself. It means the file-leader, the first in order, the true and ultimate Prince. That word is retained for Christ Himself, not by collusion between the writers, but by the overruling of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus spoke of Satan as the prince, the ruler of this world, it was always in connection with something He was saying of Himself. There are only three recorded occasions, and they all were when the shadow of the Cross was resting upon Him; when He was coming very near to what Russell Lowell so wonderfully described as the

> " . . . death grapple in the darkness
> 'Twixt old systems and the Word: "

when,—to use the language of man, and the measurements of time,—He was coming to the very hour of His conflict, that final conflict between the Prince of life and the prince of evil. Then He used the term, "*the prince of this world.*"

" Now shall the *prince of this world* be cast out." [1]

" *The prince of the world* cometh: and he hath nothing in Me." [2]

" *The prince of this world* hath been judged." [3]

There are expositors who suggest that our Lord there used a designation which has reference to the primal creation of Satan, and I believe that to be true. When we know the whole story, we shall probably find that the first habitation of Satan was this world; that the prince of the creation described in the first verse of Genesis was Lucifer, this very Satan; and that he fell in that relation. By the use of this term our Lord was going back to that earliest fact.

[1] John xii. 31. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 30. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 11.

Satan was "the prince of this world," the one whose realm in the Divine economy was this world; and that partially explains for me his attack upon the parents of the race, whose mission in the Divine economy was connected with restoration.

It is sufficient however for us to observe this description of him, in his relation to the Lord Himself. John declared that "the whole world lieth in the evil one." This is a picture of Satan's mastery of men, who have become materialized.

We must not however leave that descriptive term in the shadows that reveal the power of Satan; but rather in the light that reveals the mastery of our Lord. "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out"; "He hath nothing in Me"; and, "the prince of this world hath been judged." The Lord always used the term in order to show that the sceptre is taken from the grasp of Satan, and held in His own right hand.

Beyond this recognition and revelation of one ruling personality of evil, there is to be found in the teaching of the Lord a constant recognition of multitudes of evil beings, all acting under the direction of this one ruler. We shall examine that teaching by considering the common name used for these beings, and two defining terms.

The common name is "demons." Endless confusion has been caused in our English versions, both Authorized and Revised, by failure to distinguish in translation between devils and demons. In the Authorized Version the distinction is not made at all; and the Revisers perpetuated the blunder, in spite of the strong protest of the American Committee. In the American Revision the distinction is carefully and consistently made. Rotherham makes the distinction, and so also does Weymouth. If we lose sight of this distinction we cannot understand the teaching of our Lord.

The word demon is but the Anglicized form of the Greek word. Its derivation is very uncertain. Perhaps it comes from a root meaning to distribute; and if so, the idea has come from the Greek conception of the demon as being a tutelary deity, that is, one who, being intermediate between the sons of men and the final gods, distributed the gifts of the gods to men. Perhaps it comes from a root meaning wise, or knowing, and Socrates strongly held that to be the meaning of the word, and that the demons were wise ones, or knowing ones. If we try to find out what the word suggests, not by its root meaning, but by its use in classical Greek, we are still in the presence of great difficulty; and yet such an attempt will lead us to the light which I think is to be found in the New Testament.

Hesiod distinctly declared that the demons were the spirits of the men of the golden age, who had become mediators between the gods and the sons of men. Homer spoke of the demons almost invariably in a bad sense.

Hesiod's references to demons suggested that their influence on human life was entirely beneficent. Homer sometimes admits that also, but the prevailing use of the word in his writings suggests that their influence was evil.

In the writings of Empedocles we find that he thought of the influence of the demon as sometimes good and sometimes bad.

Christian writers, both those of the New Testament and the great fathers of the Church, denied the intermediation of spirits or angels between men and God. The great Christian conception was that every man had right of access to God, and needed no such mediation. This explains Paul's strong protest against voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels. Christian teachers looked upon demons as wholly bad.

In the New Testament the word demons is always used in an evil sense by Christian writers and speakers; and

whereas the Greek idea, according to Hesiod, was that demons were the spirits of the men of the Golden Age, the New Testament teaches that they are angelic spirits who have lost their first estate, and fallen from their first habitation.

May not these myths and legends of a Golden Age have this element of truth, that they refer to that age of the earth before the catastrophe, when angels were the inhabitants; and because they kept not their first estate, were cast down from their proper habitation. We may find very much of light in what we call paganism, in proportion as we understand that God has never wholly abandoned man to darkness in the midst of probationary life.

A reference to dispossession is the only kind recorded from the lips of our Lord respecting demons. There are two exceptions: first when He quoted the opinion of the multitude concerning John, "He hath a demon"; and secondly the declaration He made concerning Himself, "I have not a demon." These are the only exceptions to the rule laid down, that whenever He spoke of demons it was in connection with exorcism. The only relation He had with this under-world of evil beings was that of conflict with them, freeing men from their power, and casting out those that possessed humanity.

There are two defining terms of which He made use in connection with demons. He called them spirits. In describing the condition of a man from whom they were cast out, He said "the unclean *spirit*, when he is gone out of the man, passeth through waterless places, seeking rest, and finding it not." [1] In addressing them He said, "Come forth, thou unclean *spirit*"; "Thou dumb and deaf *spirit*, I command thee, come out of him." In speaking of the rejoicing of the Seventy, He said, "In this rejoice not; that the *spirits* are subject unto you." In that word there is a revelation of the nature of these fallen ones.

[1] Matt. xii. 43–45.

In the last mention He made of them, in the great prophecy of His ultimate victory, as recorded by Matthew, He called them angels, messengers; and revealed the fact that they were under the authority of Satan in the words "age-abiding fire, reserved for the devil and his angels."[1]

This teaching reveals our enemies in the spiritual world, as it sets before us the fact of one personality, the *archon*, the ruler, who is prince of this world; and reveals to us multitudes of spiritual beings under his control, following his command, coöperating with him in a persistent fight against the Kingdom of God, against righteousness, and holiness, and love. It is this unveiling which most evidently was in the mind of the apostle when he said, "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places."[2]

But this teaching reveals something more, and it is the something more which comes to the heart as a message of hope and of courage. If there were nothing but this unveiling of these hosts of wickedness, how we should be filled with fear. But the teaching reveals the Master as perfectly knowing them, persistently opposing them, and constantly triumphing over them. In the days of His flesh, after that hour of supreme temptation as a man in the wilderness, we never find our Lord entering into any discussion with evil spirits, but always addressing them in terms of perfect mastery and perfect command; triumphing over them through all the pathway of His teaching, until at last He triumphed over them in His Cross, putting them off from Him, making a show of them openly in the universe of God.

Therefore we fight under a Master Who has perfectly won the victory, and under Whose control we also may be more than conquerors.

[1] Matt. xxv. 41. [2] Eph. vi. 12.

VI. MAN

"It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

"Again it is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

"It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."—*Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10.*

"The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."—*vi. 22–24.*

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"—*vii. 11.*

"And be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."—*x. 28.*

"Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man. . . . Perceive ye not, that whatsoever goeth into the mouth passeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings: these are the things which defile the man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man."—*xv. 11, 17–20.*

"For what shall a man be profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?"—*xvi. 26.*

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven."—*xviii. 3.*

"I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."—*xxii. 32.*

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets."—*xxii. 37–40.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—*John iii. 3, 5.*

"No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me. . . . And He said, For this cause have I said unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it be given unto him of the Father."—*vi. 44, 45, 65.*

VI

MAN

"THE Word became flesh," [1] to declare the Father and to manifest man. These are John's own words. The prologue to his Gospel concludes with this statement: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath *declared* Him." [2] The introduction to his first epistle affirms that "the Life was *manifested*," [3] in that which the disciples saw with their eyes, beheld, and which their hands handled. Thus in the one Person, we hear the full and final declaration of God; and see the manifestation of man, according to the will of God.

By His persistent use of the title, "Son of Man," for Himself, our Lord marked His identification with humanity, and suggested the truth that the final understanding of human nature must result from a knowledge of Himself. In considering His teaching about God, we declared that the final teaching is not to be found in His words, but in Himself as the Word. So here, also, His final teaching about man is not to be found in the words, but in Himself, as the Word made flesh. We sing with perfect accuracy,

> "Would we view God's brightest glory,
> We must look in Jesu's face."

We may sing with equal accuracy,

> "Would we know man's highest glory,
> We must look in Jesu's face."

[1] John i. 14. [2] *Ibid.*, i. 18. [3] 1 John i. 2.

Turning now to the actual words of the Master concerning man, we at once recognize that there is a sense in which everything He said has a bearing on our subject, because His mission in the world as the Sent of the Father had to do with man primarily, and fundamentally; though its ultimate meaning could not be measured. The words of Jesus then, now under consideration, are only those which reveal His conception of human nature, and these fall into two groups: first, those which reveal man ideally, or essentially, that is, according to a Divine purpose; and secondly, those revealing man actually or experimentally, that is, as Jesus found him. The words of Jesus which reveal His view of the essential facts of human nature are taken from the Gospel of Matthew, and the references in the other Gospels are only indicated in passing. These passages follow each other in consecutive and chronological order, and throw light upon man in five matters: first, his relation to God; secondly, the unity of his being; thirdly, the inter-relationship of the physical and the spiritual; fourthly, the continuity of personality beyond that which we describe as death; and finally, the perfect law of probationary life.

His teaching as to the relation of man to God is revealed most remarkably in the story of the temptation. The supreme revelation of man in that story is not to be found in anything Jesus said, but rather in the Man Himself. We constantly read the story giving our attention to its first and preëminent value, that namely of its revelation of temptation, and of the secret of victory over it. While that is perfectly natural, and accurate, it is true also that through the mists and the darkness of the experience of temptation, forgetting for the moment as far as possible the assault upon the soul of the man, we have a revelation of the essential facts concerning human nature. There are ways in which man is seen more clearly in that wilderness experience than

on any other page in the New Testament. There, while He was under the assault of the foe, the essential truth concerning man was revealed. The first temptation was directed against the physical life: "Command that these stones become bread." [1] The second temptation was directed against the spiritual life: "Cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning thee." [2] The last temptation was directed, not against the instrument in itself, but against the vocation: "All these"—the kingdoms of the world—"will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." [3] There is man, physical, spiritual; the supreme glory and meaning of his existence being the fact that he is created for a purpose.

Looking then upon that remarkable unveiling of truth concerning humanity, the words that fell from the lips of this Man, as He answered temptation, constitute a clear revelation of His conception of the relation of man to God within the Divine purpose and economy. The first word "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," [4] reveals the true sustenance of human life. The second word "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," [5] while a negative one, reveals positively the true principle of human life. The final word, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," [6] reveals the true object of human life.

The word as to the sustenance of life was spoken in answer to the temptation against the physical. The suggestion of evil is that all a man needs for the sustenance of his life is bread; that a man is material only; that if there be physical hunger unmet and unsatisfied, the man will perish. The answer of the perfect man is that in these matters also the spiritual is supreme. If, in obedience to the Word of God,

[1] Matt. iv. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 6. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 9. [4] *Ibid.*, iv. 4. [5] *Ibid.*, iv. 7. [6] *Ibid.*, iv. 10.

the material must suffer hunger, then the true sustenance of life is that of the spiritual by obedience to the word or will of God. What a revolution would be wrought in our lives if we once grasped that tremendous conception of our humanity; that a man is to live by the Word of God, obey the Word of God, conform his life to the Divine purpose, recognize that in essence he is not dust but spirit; and that the supreme fact in life is the spiritual.

In the second word "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," we have a revelation of the true principle of human life. It is that of such perfect confidence in God as declines to make experiments to see whether He will take care of a man or not. The temptation, which appeared to be an appeal to the highest instinct of trust, was really an appeal to doubt, as it suggested that He should prove His faith by an unwarranted, unordained experiment. The answer of Christ in effect was, The quiet calm of My confidence in God is such that I have no need to make an experiment to prove the thing I know to be true. That is the master-principle of life; the continuous and active relationship of confidence in God which enables a man to abide quietly in the place of the Divine appointment.

The final word, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve," is so wonderful that if there could be full exposition of it, it would be seen to flame with glory, and flash with splendour, making the soul burn with all high enthusiasm, and capturing the imagination of young and old alike. It is a description of the true fulfillment of the meaning of every human life. As the first speaks of the immediate and central relation; and the second speaks of the continuous and active relation; this describes the ultimate and glorious relation of every human life to God: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." This does not merely mean,—and

these negative expositions seem sometimes out of place, and yet perhaps are important,—that on the first day of the week we are to assemble together, and sing His praise, and bow before Him in prayer; but rather that the whole life shall become worship, and the whole life shall be service. The whole life is worship only when every power God created is, at its fullest and best, open to Him; and pouring itself out in service to His name. Flowers worship God in being what He meant them to be, in the unfolding of their possibilities of life; in all the splendour and delicate perfection of their being they utter forth His praise, and serve Him by ministering to the sense of beauty which He has placed within the heart of humanity. How then is man to worship God and serve Him? By the full realization of life, by the discovery of all the powers of the being as He has placed them within man's personality; and by the development of them through processes of training and exercise, with the will always set in the direction of the Divine glory. When this is done, what beauty and what glory result! The song that is in us will find expression; the vision that we have seen will be reproduced upon the canvas; the music that we hear will be repeated that other men may hear it; the word that burns like fire will be uttered that other men may be ennobled by it. I worship when I preach. You worship when you paint, when you follow your profession, and in it abide with God. It is the fulfillment of life to glorify God by the realization of all His great and gracious purposes. What a vision of man! The immediate and central relationship, living by the word of God; the continuous and active relationship, confidence and perfect peace; the ultimate and glorious relationship, worshipping Him by being what He made him to be, and doing what He meant him to do!

From that first glance, through the simplest and yet sublimest words, we turn to the word in which Jesus revealed

the unity of man's being. He said, "The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!" [1]

All that seems to have very little connection with our theme; but it is important because those are the words that prepare for, and lead up to these: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." [2]

In the words, "The lamp of the body is the eye," the eye is used figuratively for man's outlook upon life; for the way in which a man sees things affects the way in which he acts, and affects therefore the very nature and character of the man. Closely connected with that, our Lord referred to the response that a man makes to his outlook; he serves, and he serves either God or mammon. Now turning from the direct teaching of these words, it is evident that our Lord looked upon man as unified within his own personality.

We shall turn presently to another Scripture in which we shall find that He recognized the dual fact in every man's life; but this is the deeper word. This was spoken, not of a man as one of a fallen race; but of a man according to the Divine ideal. Yes, we shall meet with Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde presently; but this is the deeper teaching, and involves the fact that either Dr. Jekyll or Mr. Hyde becomes master; that ultimately no man can be divided within himself; that in the processes of what seem to be conflicting forces there is an underlying unity of personality from which no man can escape. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." A man may attempt to do so for some time. It may seem as though he were doing so, but all the while, in the deepest

[1] Matt. vi. 22–23. [2] *Ibid.*, vi. 24.

secret shrine of sacred and awful individuality, either the service of mammon, or the service of God is hypocrisy; that there is a central fact in human personality which dominates everything else, and which presently will express itself through everything else. If thine eye be dark, then the light that is in thee is darkness. If thine eye be single, then the light that is in thee is glorious. Man is not dual, but one; and either this or that, commanding him, realizes itself within him; and he ultimately partakes of the nature of that to which he yields himself, whether God or mammon.

Our next word is one revealing His estimate of the relative values of the physical and the spiritual. "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna." [1] With the latter part of that statement we are not now dealing; for we are considering, not the full teaching of the text, but its implication.

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the life. We at once see how revolutionary that word is! Men live to-day as though the killing of the body were the supreme and most awful matter. Christ treats it as an incident merely, something about which a man need not be careful under certain circumstances. "Be not afraid of them which kill the body, and after that have no more they can do." [2]

Thus at once we see His estimate of the relative values of the physical and the spiritual.

There are two other words of our Lord, in which He revealed the same principle in a relative application. The first is that solemn enquiry, "What shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? or what shall a man give in exchange for his life?" [3] This clearly reveals the central truth of His conception, that life is not ultimately physical; that there is an essential life to which the whole

[1] Matt. x. 28. [2] Luke xii. 4. [3] Matt. xvi. 26.

material world cannot minister. The other word is that which Luke alone chronicled: "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." [1]

The next word is that containing His teaching concerning the continuity of personality, or the immortality of man. Speaking in answer to the Sadducees, who had asked Him a captious question concerning resurrection, He quoted the word of God to Moses, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and continuing, He affirmed, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." [2]

To the Sadducees the question of the resurrection of a body was of little moment. They denied the immortality of the spirit, and therefore our Lord's answer to them went behind their question as to bodily resurrection, and dealt with the philosophy which prompted it. He said to them in effect, The question you ask about bodily resurrection is a very small one in comparison with the difficulty you raise concerning the spiritual nature of man. He then appealed to their Scriptures. God had said to Moses, when commissioning him for his great work, "I am . . . the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" [3] and at that time, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead, their graves being known. But, said Jesus, "God is not the God of the dead." They were even then alive. God is the God of the living. By that word He affirmed the continuity of human personality beyond that which we call death, and affirmed that of which we sometimes speak, with more or less of accuracy, as the immortality of the soul.

The final word in this first group is that in which He uttered the perfect law of probationary life; and this again in answer to a questioner, who asked which was the greater commandment. To him He said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and

[1] Luke xii. 15. [2] Matt. xxii. 32. [3] Exod. iii. 6.

with all thy mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." [1]

That, Christ said, is the law which is absolutely sufficient for man in his probationary life, in that period through which he must pass in order to be perfected and prepared for the larger and more splendid existence that lies beyond the present. First, he must love God; that is, there must be the complete response of all his being to God as God; and in that, the true recognition of the unity of his own being, and the unification of that being around God. The love of God is the master-law of life. In Mark's account of this incident he tells us that Christ introduced that word of the commandment by using the word with which it is introduced in the Old Testament Scripture, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord." Man is one, essentially; and his unity of being is to be realized and maintained by conformity to the unity of Deity. Then man must love God. The second part of this law is the sequence of the first, the proof of the first, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." [2] In the love of God there is the unification of self. In the love of neighbour there is the expression of self at its highest and best. If a man love God, he loves his neighbour, and cannot help it. If a man love God, he expresses himself in his love to his neighbour, and so fulfills the full and perfect law of life. Our Lord carried out this thought in exposition as He said, "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." So that if this human being, who is of such Divine relation, and of such unity, and in whom the spiritual is the supreme, and who persists beyond the article of death; if he, during the period of probation, loves God, and loves his neighbour;

[1] Matt. xxii. 37–40. [2] Mark xii. 29, 31.

there is no law that he will break, there is no prophetic word to which he will be disobedient.

The references to man according to human experience are briefer. All those which we have considered may be used of Jesus Himself. But those to which we are now about to refer could not have been spoken of Him. The other references dealt with essential humanity. These deal with humanity as He found it.

The first to which I refer is that in which He said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children."[1] That was a flash of light upon the men in the midst of whom He stood. Notice carefully the two things He said: first, "being evil"; and secondly, "know how to give good gifts unto your children."

The phrase "being evil" described an influence exerted, rather than a condition; but yet it postulated a condition. He looked at these men, and He described them as evil, men exerting an evil influence; but that was because they were evil in heart. And yet He said,—and notice this carefully,—that they "knew how to give good gifts unto their children"; thus recognizing that even in these men, whom He described as evil, there persisted a capacity for the highest. They were evil, they were hurtful and harmful in their attitude towards men; but there was a region in their consciousness which was different. Towards their own children they were conscious of another aspect of desire, intention, and influence. They would give good gifts to them. Thus our Lord recognized that in the men who were persecuting Him to the very death, there was this dual fact; evil mastering them, and yet a capacity for goodness that was demonstrated and expressed in the very love they bore to their children, and in the way they knew how to give them good gifts. This man of evil, watch him with

[1] Matt. vii. 11.

his children! His goodness to his child does not change the fact of his evil nature and influence; but it does demonstrate a capacity for the highest. Our Lord recognized these two things.

Then we turn to that terrible word, in which He spoke of the defilement of human nature, "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man"[1]; and the point of our Lord's teaching is not that a man is defiled by the things that come out therefrom, but that he is proved defiled by the things that come out therefrom. "Evil thoughts, murders, adulteries"; all evil things proceeding from the mouth, demonstrate the defilement of the life at its centre and core.

It was in view of these conceptions that He uttered the word to His own disciples about entrance to the Kingdom. When they asked about greatness in His Kingdom, He took them back to the wicket gate, and He said, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."[2] In view of these conceptions He declared to Nicodemus the necessity for new birth.[3] In the one case He indicated a human responsibility, the turning back to childhood; and in the other case He indicated a Divine action, the birth anew into childhood. Standing in the midst of humanity, He declared that man, although of such wonderful capacity in the economy of God, was yet of such defilement in the actuality of his life, that there was no hope for his realization of the Divine intention save by the mystic touch of a new birth, and the communication of a new life.

The final word which we quote concerning man was that in which He declared the opportunity for human restoration. He said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which sent Me draw him,"[4] and was careful to explain

[1] Matt. xv. 11, 17–20.
[2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 3.
[3] John iii. 3, 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, vi. 44.

that every man is drawn of the Father sooner or later in some way. He quoted from the ancient prophets, saying, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God." [1] When we turn to the prophecies in Isaiah and Jeremiah from which He quoted these words, we find that in each case the declaration was made when the prophet was singing of the restoration of the lost order, "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." [2] Continuing, our Lord revealed human responsibility in the words "Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto Me." When men are drawn of the Father, not all who hear will come; but all who hear *and learn* will come. The movement which issues in the restoration of a man from his degradation must come from God, and from Him alone; but every man is so appealed to, every man is so drawn of the Father; and human responsibility is that not of hearing alone, but of learning, and obeying, and answering.

This meditation reveals the splendour of humanity according to the Divine ideal as revealed in the teaching of Christ. It also reveals His clear understanding of the calamity of human experience as He faced it. But finally it reveals the glory of the possible restoration as He declared it.

If we set our lives in the light of His teaching, we shall think highly of our own possibility in the economy of God; we shall think with sorrow and contrition of all our failure in the light of the high ideal; and we shall think with hope of the possibility of restoration by the way of His great and gracious mission.

[1] John vi. 45. [2] Isa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 34.

B. THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING SIN AND SALVATION

I. SIN

"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."—*Matthew ix. 6.*

"Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins."—*xxvi. 27, 28.*

. . . . . .

"Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."—*Mark iii. 29.*

. . . . . .

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem."—*Luke xxiv. 46, 47.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin."—*John viii. 34.*

"If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth."—*ix. 41.*

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father."—*xv. 22-24.*

"And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin. . . Of sin, because they believe not on Me."—*xvi. 8, 9.*

I

SIN

THE subject of sin is arresting, absorbing, and abstruse In the broadest sense sin may be defined in the words of Kant as that which ought not to be.

Dr. Orr opens his volume on "Sin as a Problem of To-day," with an illuminative paragraph, which I venture to quote:

"What we name sin is, from the religious point of view, the tragedy of God's universe. What it is, how it came, why it is permitted to develop itself into the havoc and ruin it surely entails, what is to be the end of it, above all, how its presence and working are to be reconciled with goodness, holiness, love, in the God Who has permitted it—these are the crushing questions that press upon the spirit of every one who thinks deeply on the subject. In its very conception sin is that which *ought not to be;* which ought never to have been. How, then, or why, is it here, this awful, glaring, deadly, omnipresent reality in human history and experience? For sin *is* here: this, conscience and universal experience attest. The evidences of its presence are not slight or intermittent. Men may belittle it, try to forget it, treat it as a superstition or disease of imagination—there are no lack of such attempts in the thinking of to-day—but the grim reality asserts itself in the dullest consciousness, and compels acknowledgment of its existence and hateful power. Drug conscience as deeply as you may, a time comes when it awakes. Turn in what direction one will, sin confronts one as a fact in human life—an experience of the heart, a

development in history, a crimson thread in literature, a problem for science, an enigma for philosophy."

In view of this, we turn with reverent interest and expectation to the teaching of Christ; and recognize at once that there is nothing in His teaching in the nature of an attempt to solve for us such problems as are suggested by the paragraph quoted. Sent of the Father, He came into the midst of conditions which He recognized, and with which He proceeded to deal. There is abounding evidence in these Gospel narratives of His keen and clear consciousness of the fact of sin. It is equally evident that the deepest meaning of His presence in the world was that of grappling with this fact of sin, both in itself and in its results. As in previous studies, so also in this, even in the absence of clear definition, we are able to apprehend His conception of the subject under consideration by His references to it. In the course of His teaching, moreover, we discover certain outstanding declarations which reveal man's relation to sin, and his responsibility concerning it.

Then let us consider first, the revelation of His references to this fact of sin; and secondly the teaching of certain outstanding declarations which enable us to understand our relation to, and responsibility concerning sin.

First, then, as to the revelation of the references. There is no subject for which the Bible uses a larger number of descriptive terms than this of sin. The Old Testament has at least eleven entirely distinct and separate words by which to describe it; and of these words Canon Girdlestone has said, "The pictorial power of the Hebrew language is seldom exhibited more clearly than in connection with the various aspects of evil. Every word is a piece of philosophy; nay, it is a revelation." [1]

When we turn to the New Testament we find an equal

[1] "Old Testament Synonyms," p. 76.

number of words; indeed, it would seem as though every Hebrew word has its equivalent in the Greek language of the New Testament; and of this fact Canon Girdlestone further remarks, "With regard to all these words, it is to be noticed that the New Testament leans upon the Old Testament, and that the vivid teaching of that latter is taken for granted as authoritative by the writers of the Christian Scriptures." [1] Approaching the study of these words of the New Testament, Archbishop Trench declares, "A mournfully numerous group of words. . . . Nor is it hard to see why. For sin . . . may be regarded under an infinite number of aspects, and in all languages has been so regarded; and as the diagnosis of it belongs most of all to the Scriptures, nowhere else are we likely to find it contemplated on so many sides, set forth under such various images." [2]

In the course of His teaching our Lord made use of seven different words when referring to sin; two of them constantly, the other five incidentally, and only on two or three occasions in each case. In the first two of these words we discover His conception of the essential nature of sin; and in the other five we have revelation of certain aspects of sin.

But our words are inadequate, and constantly cause trouble in our thinking; and a criticism like that is warranted by the fact that the one so criticizing is face to face with a difficulty. We speak of *evil* and take up our Bible and read, "I"—the Lord—"create evil"; [3] and are conscious almost of a shock, which is caused by the fact that we forget that the word *evil* may stand for a great deal more than is intended in any one use of it. That may be the reason for the variety of words employed in the Bible—at least twenty-two different words, eleven in each language—and

[1] "Old Testament Synonyms," p. 86.
[2] "Synonyms of the New Testament," pp. 239, 240.
[3] Isa. xlv. 7.

of the fact that our Lord described this appalling and awe-inspiring fact by different words, two of them constantly recurring in the course of His ministry.

The first is *poneros*, which is commonly translated *evil*. The root idea of the word is that which is hurtful. The first essential meaning of the root from which the word comes is that of pain; and the word itself suggests pain and that which causes pain; that is, hurtful or harmful. The use of the word has reference to that which causes trouble, and to the trouble which is caused. It describes the active principle producing all calamity, material, mental, and moral; and it is also used of the calamity which is thus produced. In the case of the statement already quoted, "I"—the Lord—"create evil," we should be more accurate if instead of the word *evil* we substituted the word *calamity*; only we must interpret it by the context, which shows that it refers to calamity falling upon a guilty city. It is simply a declaration of the sovereignty of Jehovah over the working of evil, so that it must, within the realm of the Divine overruling and government, issue in calamity.

This word Christ constantly used, certainly over forty times, and it suggests the active principle which produces calamity, whether material or mental or moral; and refers to the calamity so caused. When we group the occasions upon which our Lord is recorded to have used the word, we find that He used it as descriptive of Satan, of demons, of men individually, of the age in the midst of which He wrought His work; and upon occasion, in the abstract sense. By His employment of this word certain facts are made perfectly clear. He recognized the existence of a force contrary to the good and perfect and acceptable will of God. He referred to this force, as having its fountainhead in a person, Satan. He recognized that other spiritual beings, that man, that the age itself, had passed under the influence

of this force, and were mastered by it. By repeated reference He made clear His understanding of the fact that this force was in itself corrupt, and in its influence was corrupting; that it marred the handiwork of God, prevented the realization of His purpose, was against His holiness, and contrary to the deepest intentions of His love. He gave no single word of explanation as to the genesis of this force in the universe.

The second term, *hamartia*, is the most common word in the New Testament for sin; and is usually so translated. The root of the word is quite uncertain. There are two suggestions. The first is that of a failure to grasp; the second that of missing possession. But if we are in doubt as to the root signification of this word which we translate by *sin*, we have no doubt as to its significance as we observe its use. It is a word that signifies failure, or quite simply, the missing of a mark. In material things the word is used in classic Greek of the missing of a mark, as when a man flings a spear, and it does not strike its intended target. In the mental realm, with regard to art, music and literature, the word is used of the artist, also of the musician, or the writer, who fails of the highest. Gradually, even in Greek literature, the word gained a moral significance, and was used of the man whose character and whose conduct were lower than the highest. The idea is that of failure.

This, then, was a common Greek word which New Testament writers appropriated, and used only in the moral sphere.

The Lord's use of the word was invariably ethical, and such as to imply responsibility. There is not a single instance in which our Lord made use of this word so as to suggest that it was a disease apart from a personal and immediate moral responsibility. And another matter is equally noticeable and is full of gracious light, that Christ's principal

use of the word was in connection with the central purpose of His mission, that of forgiving sin. There were occasions when He used the term apart from such reference; but in the majority of cases His references to sin were related to the thought of forgiveness. He uttered stern denunciation of those who refused this forgiveness; but in the view of Christ, sin was moral failure with which He had power to deal, so as to forgive the sinner. The glory of the redemption of the Cross shines through the references that Christ made to sin, even though some of them were of the nature of the sternest denunciation.

From this survey of His references to evil and sin I make these brief deductions. Our Lord's outlook upon evil was that He considered it to be a principle at work in the universe, antagonistic to God and to goodness. Sin, according to the conception of Christ, is the volitional act of rebellion against God in submission to this principle of evil; and consequently it is failure, the missing of the mark, the falling short of the highest.

Now for a brief and yet more hurried glance at the five other words of which our Lord made use. He employed a word, *paraptoma*, commonly translated *trespass* in our New Testament. It describes the fact of falling where one ought to have stood. It admits the possibility of the fall being non-volitional, but nevertheless recognizes it as a fall. A trespass is a fall, whether the man intended to fall or not. It is failure and imperfection in the sight of God; and that is why the saint can never cease using the prayer for forgiveness of trespasses to the end of the pilgrimage. I may be delivered from volitional sinning, but in the light of heaven's unsullied purity there is no hour in which I do not come short of the highest; and in the light of the eternal holiness I am a trespasser, and need the infinite grace of His mercy and His forbearance.

Another word, *anomia*, of which our Lord made use is commonly translated *iniquity*, but more accurately *lawlessness*. It does not describe the condition of a man who has never had the law, but rather the attitude of the man who refuses to obey the law. In the use of that word our Lord revealed His recognition of the principle upon which a man acts in the committal of sin. Sin is a missing of the mark, a failure, and it is iniquity or lawlessness when it is the result of refusal to walk in the light, and to obey law. Therein is revealed the active principle of sin in the life of the individual, which indicates responsibility.

Another word, *kakia*, is generally rendered *malice*. To understand this translation we have to remember how constantly words change in use; and in that consideration we see the necessity for passing beyond the Authorized Version to the Revised Version, and presently abandoning the Revised for a yet more modern rendering. Our word malice is used to-day almost exclusively in the realm of emotional life. But the first meaning of malice is badness, and that is the suggestion of the word of which it is a translation in the New Testament. The Greek word so translated means badness, whether it be material, mental, or moral. It is a word describing evil in itself; not so much the suffering produced, but the principle of evil which results in suffering. It is a searching word. Our Lord is only reported to have used it once, and that in somewhat remarkable application; but the value it suggests must be borne in mind when we face this fact of sin according to the teaching of Christ.

Another word, *adikia*, is commonly translated *unrighteousness*. It literally means *out of the straight*. It reveals sin in its relation to holiness and righteousness; holiness being rectitude of character, and righteousness rectitude of conduct. Sin is the opposite in character, and in conduct. It is life and activity out of the straight.

One other word, *phaulos*, He used, only once or twice, but upon supreme occasions. It is translated *evil*, and yet it is a word with which we have not already dealt. It describes the condition of good-for-nothingness, and constitutes one of the most appalling revelations of sin and evil. It is evil as that out of which good can never come; and thus the word reveals the unutterable hopelessness and corruption of sin in itself.

In these words we are brought face to face with the thought of Christ about evil and sin. To understand that thought we need to turn to the references themselves; and observe our Lord in the midst of a world in which this principle of evil was at work, confronted and surrounded by sinning men; we need to hear what He said to them, to observe His method with them, to catch these words as they pass His lips. Only by such careful consideration shall we be able to discover His conception of evil, and find His outlook upon sin. He has given us no explanation of the problem; there is no word in all His teaching which declares what the ultimate is to be, either in the case of the individual, or in the case of the race, or in the case of the universe. He uttered great words that show results, harvests, and inevitable sequences; and words which reveal His conception of the appalling nature of sin and evil. To accept His view as revealed in these words, will be to be delivered from any superficial thinking about sin; and will more and more make us tremble in its presence, and fear it with all the heart and soul and mind.

We pass in the second place to the consideration of four declarations He made; quite simple, and yet most sublime; incidentally uttered, and yet bringing men face to face with their own relation to sin, and demanding our careful consideration. These words do not deal with evil in the wider sense, but with sin in human life.

The first passages contain His words recognizing the element of personal responsibility in sin.

For example, to the Pharisees:

"If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see; your sin remaineth."[1]

Again, not to the Pharisees, but to His disciples about the Pharisees, and those who had rejected Him:

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father."[2]

Of course there are many values in these words of Christ with which we are not now dealing, in which we are not now interested. We take them now simply to draw attention to what He taught concerning the element of responsibility in sin. He declared directly to the Pharisees that sin is disobedience to light. He declared to His disciples when interpreting the fact of sin in the case of the Pharisees that He Himself had come into the world as light, that in His presence men saw; and that sin therefore consisted in their disobedience to the light which He granted them. No man can believe in the infallibility of the teaching of Jesus and declare that man is not morally responsible. Christ declared that man is not morally responsible if he has had no vision; but He declared that the moment there is vision and sight and understanding, moral responsibility is created; that such a man stands in the light, in the presence of good and of evil, and his sin consists in his refusal to answer the sight of his eyes when the light has broken upon him. We may speak of degrees of light, and indeed we must so speak. To imagine that vast multitudes of the heathen are to be consigned to everlasting punishment because they have not

[1] John ix. 41. [2] *Ibid.*, xv. 22–24.

obeyed the Gospel which we have never preached to them, is blasphemy of the worst kind. The measure of heathen responsibility is the measure of heathen light. Light creates responsibility. Sin is disobedience to light.

The next passage contains His words revealing the element of bondage in sin.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Every one that committeth sin is the bond-servant of sin." [1] The choice creates the compulsion. A man stands, seeing clearly. That is his opportunity. If he disobey the light, and turn to the evil thing, then that evil thing, gaining a victory over him, becomes his master, and he is the slave of that which he chooses. There is no need for illustration. A man yielding to some vulgar passion becomes the slave of that passion, and no matter how he strive he cannot break its power.

The next passages contain His words of warning as to the element of fixity in sin.

"Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." [2]

I choose for definite purposes of illumination to put that passage into immediate connection with another. Our Lord was referring to the Holy Spirit, and He said:

"And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin. . . . Of sin, because they believe not on Me." [3]

In the first of these passages our Lord warned men of the tendency of sin to become fixed. It is a terrible word. It is not strange that men tremble when they read it. "Whosoever shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness, but is guilty" of perpetuity of sin, fixity in sin, age-abiding sin. The men to whom He was speaking at the moment had not committed that sin. He saw that they were in danger of it, for they were attempting to account for His work by attributing His power to the

[1] John viii. 34. [2] Mark iii. 29. [3] John xvi. 8, 9.

devil; and in a flash He revealed to them that the last method of God lay beyond the hour of His own ministry. He said in effect, You can say anything against Me, and it will be forgiven you, but there is another age beyond this, that of the dispensation of the Spirit: "He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin"; of sin because they do not obey the light of My presence. If you refuse that spiritual interpretation which is yet to come, then sin will become fixed, an age-abiding sin; and an age-abiding sin involves an age-abiding nemesis and punishment. It is the most awful peril of sin which our Lord revealed in these words.

The last passages to be quoted contain the words in which He declared the possibility of the forgiveness of sin. The first is:

"The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."[1]

He had pronounced forgiveness upon a man who was sick of the palsy, and they criticized Him and said that He blasphemed; to which He replied, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, and take up thy bed, and go unto thy house."[2]

This is a wonderful picture, in which we see evil in the moral and material realms, the suffering resulting from the sin. Christ saw the connection. Then to the man He said, "Thy sins are forgiven"; and later, "Arise and walk." He never healed bodily affliction save upon the basis of removing spiritual malady. That is the meaning of the great utterance in which Matthew declared that when He healed all that were sick, He did so in fulfillment of the word of the prophet Isaiah, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our diseases."[3] All His material healing was based upon His ability to deal with the spiritual and moral

[1] Matt. ix. 6. [2] *Ibid.*, ix. 4–6. [3] *Ibid.*, viii. 17.

malady lying behind the material suffering. That was the authority to which He referred when He said, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins."

The next passage reads:

"Drink ye all of it; for this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins." [1]

The setting of these words is perfectly familiar; the surroundings of the paschal board; the institution of the new memorial feast of Christianity; the Lord taking the fruit of the vine, and saying, with the sacred cup in His hand, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins."

The final word was spoken after the Cross, and after resurrection:

"Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem." [2]

Now mark the significance of these three words of Christ. First, He claimed authority to forgive sins; secondly, He revealed His way of forgiving sins; and finally, He claimed the accomplishment of His work.

This then is the ultimate word of Christ about sin. It is a word that declares His victory over it, and His power to forgive it; and that by the way of a Cross that defies man's ability to explore it to its depths, or to speak the final word about its hidden mystery of pain. Thus our Lord teaches us the awfulness of sin, and reveals to us our solemn responsibilities in the presence of the evil force in the universe; but He stands in the midst of all the malady,—material, mental, and moral,—and claims that by the mystery of His Cross, He is able to forgive sin; and to give to every man the new opportunity by way of moral reconstruction, which shall issue in the full realization of the good and perfect and acceptable will of God.

[1] Matt. xxvi. 27, 28. [2] Luke xxiv. 46, 47.

II. SALVATION

"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to save a life, or to destroy it?"—*Luke vi. 9.*

"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."—*vii. 50.*

"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."—*viii. 48.*

"Fear not: only believe, and she shall be made whole."—*viii. 50.*

"Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."—*xvii. 19*

"Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole."—*xviii. 42.*

"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."—*xix. 10.*

II

SALVATION

THE title, Saviour, the abstract noun, salvation, and the verb, to save, have gained a peculiar sanctity by their Christian associations. These words have a common origin, coming to us from the Latin *salvus*, simply signifying safe. All the cognate words in the Latin language have equivalents in our language, of which we are perpetually making use in the realm of Christian truth. These words again have their exact equivalents in the language of which our New Testament is a translation, and all of them became current coin in the language of Christianity at a very early period.

The words *Saviour*, *salvation*, and *save*, are found in the writings of every one of the New Testament authors. In one form or another the thought runs through all the apostolic writings, and we are constantly confronted in our reading of the New Testament with the theme of salvation.

The original idea conveyed by these words is that of immunity from harm or danger. The verb to save, however, has acquired a new sense in Christian use. In ordinary use the verb to save means to preserve from danger. In the Christian sense *to save* is to deliver out of the danger, and to rescue from all the harm which has already been wrought. The substantive *salvation* in Christian speech refers at once to the activity which produces such safety, and to the state of safety which results from that activity. The title *Saviour*, in the New Testament, and in the sanctified and intelligent speech of the Christian Church has been reserved for the One Who saves in this great sense.

With these preliminary and technical definitions in mind,

we turn to a consideration of Christ's teaching on the subject; distinctly recognizing that we are not now dealing with the method, but confining ourselves strictly to the idea conveyed. In subsequent chapters we shall further consider this great theme of salvation, considering other aspects; but now we are investigating the thought as revealed in our Lord's teaching on the subject.

What material have we at our disposal? We have no single recorded instance of our Lord's employment of the word Saviour, as applying to Himself. Only on two occasions do the Gospels record His having made use of the word salvation; once when talking to a Samaritan woman, He said to her, "salvation is from the Jews," [1] by which He most evidently meant that in the Divine economy the Hebrew nation was that through which the Messiah Saviour should come; and once when He said to Zacchæus, "To-day is salvation come to this house." [2]

But while it is true that He never used the word *Saviour*, and that we only have the record of His use of the word *salvation* twice, the word *to save* He constantly employed, both in the material and moral realms. Our translations somewhat obscure this fact. Our versions report Him as having said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole," [3] when the word is exactly the same, and we might with perfect accuracy translate: "Thy faith hath saved thee." Indeed the word is stamped upon the page in all the stories of the work and teaching of Jesus; He was constantly speaking of saving. It is however very suggestive that our Lord is never recorded as having used the word to save in any lower application than that of human life. We talk about saving property; He never did. He used the word only when referring to humanity, and to the physical, to the mental, or to the essential spiritual life. We shall con-

[1] John iv. 22. [2] Luke xix. 9. [3] *Ibid.*, viii. 48.

centrate our attention upon the story of Zacchæus as illustration and declaration. The whole story affords an illustration of our Lord's thought about salvation, for in the moment when Zacchæus stood and made his great confession of purposed restitution, our Lord said, "To-day is salvation come to this house."[1] That warrants us in using the story as an illustration of His conception of salvation. And immediately in connection therewith He made His great claim, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."[2] I propose therefore to concentrate upon that story; but I also propose to interpret, by our Lord's use of the verb to save, elsewhere what He meant thereby when He declared that He had come to save the lost.

The setting of this incident must be emphasized in order to make it plain that in this story we have a supreme illustration of the work of Christ as Saviour; and an exposition of the declaration that the purpose of His coming was that of seeking and of saving.

The story of Zacchæus is closely connected with the revelation of the hostility of Christ's enemies, which is more clearly marked in this Gospel than in either of the others. There is a development of it clearly manifest through the narrative. The fifteenth chapter is closely linked to the fourteenth. That is seen as we connect the last words of the fourteenth chapter with the first words of the fifteenth. They never ought to have been separated. Jesus was speaking, and He said: "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear"; and immediately the story runs on: "Now all the publicans and sinners were drawing near unto Him for to hear Him." That is a sequence, almost hidden by the division of our Bible into chapters. Then, still in unbroken continuity, the writer tells us, "And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners,

[1] Luke xix. 9. [2] *Ibid.*, xix. 10.

and eateth with them." Observe very carefully that their criticism of Him was due to the fact that He received sinners. If we would understand this, and get at the true meaning of it, we must set our minds free for the moment from the great values which we associate with the words, "This man receiveth sinners." We hear all the music of the evangel singing through them; but let them be read as they were spoken, as words of criticism. Then let us endeavour to see what these men saw which caused their difficulty. Christ came from the house of a Pharisee, where He had been entertained, and immediately made Himself, to all outward seeming, perfectly one with a great crowd of sinning men. His attitude towards them was not that of patronage, was not that of superiority; He took them to His heart; if I may say that which almost sounds irreverent, His attitude was that which would have been designated to-day as, "hail fellow well met," towards all the rabble gathered about. That was the astonishing thing, which perplexed the Pharisees, and made them afraid of Him. Technically and traditionally they were men of extreme purity of life. "He receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." This then is an outstanding illustration of the hostile atmosphere in which our Lord was doing His work. He answered their criticism by the parable of lost things which immediately follows; the one parable with its threefold value; the lost sheep, the lost silver, the lost son; the good shepherd, the seeking woman, and the rejoicing father; an interpretation, to those who had eyes to see, and hearts to understand, of the meaning of His familiarity with sinning men; an unfolding of the fact that He was there in the midst of sinners for the one purpose of saving them. The parable was not perfectly understood; and I follow the story on until I come to the eighteenth chapter, and there I see Him with His face set towards Jerusalem, and I hear these words, "He took

unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things."[1] He was on the same pathway, the same mission was still the passion of His heart. His face was now set towards Jerusalem. He passed through Jericho, and there occurred the incident of Zacchæus.

In this sequence our story is seen to be a remarkable illustration of His own conception of His work; first we see His attitude criticized by the Pharisees; secondly, the passion that drove Him towards the Cross was declared to disciples who were unable to understand; until finally in concrete form came a revelation of His own conception of His work.

Let us first refresh our memories as to the actual facts of the incident. In spite of all the commentators and expositors, Zacchæus did not climb the sycamore tree because he was anxious to see Jesus. He climbed the sycamore tree because there was a crowd, and he wanted to see who was causing it. The crowd was passing that way, and he climbed, notice carefully the words: "He sought to see Jesus *who He was*."[2] The real fact was that this man was curious because of the crowd. Humanity is the same in London as in Jericho. If there is a crowd in London, men always want to know what is happening; and Zacchæus, suffering from the limitation of his stature, climbed the tree to do so. It is not that he knew Jesus, and was eager to look upon Him. Zacchæus was a Roman tax-gatherer, and he was rich. He was therefore a rogue. That needs no argument. There have been many attempts to whitewash

[1] Luke xviii. 31–34. [2] *Ibid.*, xix. 3.

this man, but it is impossible. He was not a rogue because he was rich, but because he was a tax-gatherer, and rich. When John the Baptist began his ministry, he said to the publicans: "Extort no more than that which is appointed you"; [1] and those familiar with the method of this gathering of the Roman taxes know that the tax-gatherer farmed a district; and if he exacted no more than his due, he never became a rich man. But Zacchæus was a rich man, and therefore a rogue.

When Christ arrived beneath that tree, He halted, and looking up, He said, "Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." [2] I am not quite sure which of two things may be more accurately suggested by that self-invitation of Jesus to the house of Zacchæus. Perhaps both are true. First it was a sign of perfect friendship and comradeship. How many houses are there in this country to which we can invite ourselves? That is the final sign of a perfect friendship, and in that view we find another instance of the familiarity with which Christ approached these men. He asked hospitality. Or was it the word of a great sovereignty; for the King ever informs those whose hospitality He is prepared to accept? Was it not rather supremely the evidence of a profound compassion, in which sovereignty and service merged and mingled? But be that as it may, to the surprise of the man, He asked his hospitality; and gladly and joyfully he came down and received Him. As they passed together into that home, the multitude murmured. It was the last wail of hopelessness, "He is gone in to lodge with a man that is a sinner." [3]

What was the effect produced? We are told sometimes to-day that the revival we need is ethical. Here was an ethical revival. We do not know how long they were together in converse, or what Jesus said to him in the loneli-

[1] Luke iii. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, xix. 5. [3] *Ibid.*, xix. 7.

ness of his own house. But we know the results. Within a very brief period the man was disgorging his ill-gotten gains.

Now mark most carefully that, in this connection, our Lord made His one recorded public definite use of the word *salvation:* "To-day is salvation come to this house."[1] The proof that salvation had come was that the man was revealed as "a son of Abraham." Do not confuse cause and effect in this story. Christ declared salvation had come to the house. How did He prove it? "*Forasmuch* as he also is a son of Abraham." Was he not a son of Abraham before? Jesus did not recognize his sonship until he did the works which were the outcome of faith. In the hour of supreme conflict with the rulers, later on, Jesus said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye *would do the works of Abraham.*"[2] Of this man, giving up ill-gotten gains, swinging back to lines of righteousness; morally remade, and demonstrating his moral reconstruction by his righteous act; Christ said, That is a son of Abraham. To-day salvation is come to this house. There is the evidence of it!

Salvation then is a power that takes hold of a man, and remakes him. And immediately following, in closest connection, our Lord declared in simple words the meaning of His own mission in the world, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save." "To-day is salvation come to this house." The Son of Man came to do that! He was criticized for eating with sinning men, for accepting the hospitality of a rogue! But the results reveal the purpose of His going into that house. He came to seek and save that which was lost.

Now let us turn to other illustrations, in order that we may know what He really meant when He said in the presence of Zacchæus, that His business was that of saving. Let us take one or two occasions on which He used the word in the material realm. When He was about to heal

[1] Luke xix. 9. [2] John viii. 39.

the man with the withered hand in the synagogue, He challenged the scribes and Pharisees by asking this question, "Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good, or to do harm? to *save* a life, or to destroy it?" [1] When the woman touched Him and was healed of her issue of blood, He turned and said, "Daughter, thy faith hath *saved* thee; go in peace." [2] When He was taken to the house of the dead child of Jairus He said to Jairus, "Fear not: only believe, and she shall be *saved*." [3] After the cleansing of the ten lepers, He said to the one who alone returned to praise God, "Arise, and go thy way: thy faith hath *saved* thee." [4] Once again, when He healed the blind man, He said to him, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath *saved* thee." [5]

In the case of the man with the withered hand, what did He mean by *saving*? The withered hand was restored. In the case of the woman with the issue of blood what did He mean? "The issue of her blood was stanched." When He spoke of the dead child being *saved*, what did He mean? "Her spirit returned," and immediately she rose. When He spoke to the leper, what did He mean by saying "thy faith hath *saved* thee"? He was cleansed. What did He mean by *being saved* when the blind man received his sight? He saw. Gather together those illustrations, and we find in every case that on the lips of Jesus the word *save* meant the negativing of destructive forces, and the restoration to men and women of all that had been lost thereby. That is in the material realm alone. The withered hand was restored whole as the other. For long, long years in the case of the woman the blood had been flowing, and she had suffered ostracism, excommunication, and the loss of everything; and in a moment the fountain

[1] Luke vi. 9.
[2] *Ibid.*, viii. 48.
[3] *Ibid.*, viii. 50.
[4] *Ibid.*, xvii. 19.
[5] *Ibid.*, xviii. 42.

of her blood was stanched, the whole trouble ceased. The child was dead; He uttered one soft rhythmic command, "Talitha cumi," and the spirit came back, and the eyelids fluttered, the lips opened, the limbs moved, and she rose and went to father and mother. Leprosy was cleansed, so that the flesh was again the flesh of a little child. Blindness was ended, and sight given. That was His common use of the word.

Pass from these material illustrations, and take two only in the moral realm. The first is that of the woman who was a sinner, who came into the house of Simon; and Simon stood in amazement and in anger. What did Simon see that shocked him? Simon saw a fallen woman fondling Jesus; and we miss the whole impact of the story if we dare to put it in any softer form or fashion. Luke with fine delicacy says, "A woman which was in the city, a sinner;" and this woman crossed the threshold of the house of Simon, knelt behind the couch on which Jesus reclined at the board, and began to wash His feet with her tears as she wept, and wipe them with her hair. Simon in amazement saw a woman who had never crossed the threshold before,—a sinning woman,—fondling Jesus; and he said within his soul, That either means that He will be polluted, or else that there is some guilty secret in the past. Now listen to the words of Christ: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee"; and to the reply, "Master, say on!" Then the Master put that woman into comparison with Simon, and said in effect: Simon, your mistake is that you are looking at the woman as she was. Look at her as she is. You only know her past. Look at her now. You have criticized her as being a sinning woman. I tell you, Simon, that, by the side of her, you are as coarse sack-cloth in comparison with finest silk. In the matter of common courtesy that woman has made up for your boorishness by

her sweetness and her love. And, Simon, now I will tell you the secret. Her sins which are many are forgiven;—for Christ did not mean to say that she was forgiven because she loved; but that she loved because she was forgiven. He had known her before, He had met her before. He had wrought in her soul the moral healing that had remade her! Then He looked at her, and He said, "Thy faith hath *saved* thee."[1] He used the word now in the moral realm, and what does the story reveal as to its meaning? A sinning, soiled, smirched woman, held in profound contempt by Simon the Pharisee, had become the gentle, the refined, the beautiful, who made up for the boorishness of his failure in the tenderness of her ministry to her Lord. His moral use of the word has the same significance as His material use of it, with a broader reach, and a more spacious application. To save, according to this conception of Christ, is to take hold of all the destructive forces, and to destroy them, and to realize the highest beauty and glory of life.

The other occasion is that of Zacchæus who, at first hard and unscrupulous, suddenly became repentant, and compassionate, giving half his goods to the poor, making restitution fourfold. Of that change Christ said, That is salvation, to-day is salvation come to this house; and I came to bring it; "the Son of Man is come to seek and to *save* that which was lost."[2]

Salvation then according to the teaching of Christ is the complete change from one condition to its opposite. The withered hand healthy and powerful, cessation of the issue of blood, the dead child alive, the leprous men cleansed, the blind eyes seeing; all these He described as saved.

Passing to the moral, we reach the realm of mysticism. But we may interpret the moral by the material. The forgiveness of sins is not merely that God will never again

[1] Luke vii. 50. [2] *Ibid.*, xix. 10.

mention the things done in the past. The forgiveness of sins means sins put away, not as guilt merely, but as virus, poison, disability.

Salvation in all its full sense is not a present experience of the saint. The apostle wrote, and his meaning grows upon me, "Now is salvation nearer to us than when we first believed."[1] There is a sense in which we come immediately into possession of the force that destroys the destructive, and that remakes; but never in this world is either salvation or condemnation completed. Nevertheless the process is one that culminates in perfection; and Christ will never think of me as finally saved until He gathers me into His presence, and in the last beatific vision makes even my body to be conformed to the body of His glory. That is His purpose, and for that purpose He has power adequate. According to the teaching of Jesus, salvation or safety is the state of having the destructive forces destroyed, and the essential life realized. The Son of Man came to do that work.

Place this meditation in relation to our previous one, in which we saw what Christ taught concerning sin, as to the element of human responsibility, the fact of bondage in sin, and the awful peril of fixity in sin. Place that awe-inspiring teaching concerning sin by the side of this concerning salvation. Salvation means, according to the interpretation of Jesus, first the forgiveness of a man for failure to fulfill responsibility; secondly the liberty of a man in that he had become the bond-slave of sin; and finally power in the man, denying, breaking up the fixity of sin, and bringing him into a glorious liberty. Every material miracle had in it the element of moral value, and the final truth revealed is that, according to Jesus, salvation, when it is accomplished, is immunity from all harm, and all danger; and His mission is that of bringing such salvation to men who need it.

[1] Rom. xiii. 11.

III. HIS SAVING MISSION

"Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill."—*Matthew v. 17.*

"Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace but a sword!"—*x. 34.*

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."—*x. 40.*

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—*xx. 28.*

. . . . . .

"He that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me."—*Luke x. 16.*

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, if it is already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"—*xii. 49–50.*

"The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."—*xix. 10.*

. . . . . .

"I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not."—*John v. 43.*

"I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."—*x. 10.*

"For this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name."—*xii. 27–28.*

III

HIS SAVING MISSION

Bearing in mind the general conception and claim of Christ touching salvation, we proceed to consider His teaching concerning His saving mission. We start with the claim itself, uttered in relation to the moral miracle wrought in the case of Zacchæus; and there are one or two preliminary matters important to the correct apprehension of its value. First, the title "the Son of Man" was our Lord's favourite title for Himself. It must be recognized also that His use of it was personal, and not generic. Even though it be a mathematical way of stating it, there is suggestiveness in the fact that the title occurs two-and-thirty times in the Gospel of Matthew, fifteen times in the Gospel of Mark, twenty-six in Luke, and twelve in John; and that, with two exceptions, it is always used by Christ Himself, of Himself. In the Gospel of John, at the twelfth chapter, we find that men once said to Him, "We have heard out of the law that the Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? who is this Son of Man?"[1] Evidently they took the phrase from His own lips, impressed by His continual use of it, and challenged Him as to what He meant when He described Himself as the Son of Man. In every other case, all through the Gospels, this descriptive phrase was used by Christ Himself. A careful comparison of these passages will show that our Lord never used the phrase in a generic sense, or with reference to any other than Himself.

Notice also the claim made in the general terms of this

[1] John xii. 34.

text. We have found that when Christ used the word *save* of material miracle, He described the complete restoration to health of the person who had been afflicted; and that when He used the phrase in the moral realm, He described the complete restoration to holiness of character and rectitude of conduct of such as had been spiritually and morally disabled.

But the central word of value for the present consideration is the word "came." "The Son of Man *came* to seek and to save that which was lost."[1] In referring to His mission our Lord made use of two methods of speech. He spoke of Himself constantly as the Sent of the Father, and He spoke of Himself as *coming* for the doing of a work. The first method is so full of interest and value that I cannot wholly pass over it. In my Testament I have marked out the occasions upon which He claimed to be sent of God, and it is remarkable how constantly this thought was present to His own mind. Each of the synoptists chronicles at least one instance, and in each case an important one, in which He referred to the fact that He was the Sent of God: "He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."[2] Luke chronicles the negative statement also, "He that rejecteth you rejecteth Me; and he that rejecteth Me rejecteth Him that sent Me."[3] But this claim of the Lord is most remarkably manifest in the Gospel of John. It is the very warp of His teaching as there set forth. The first instance occurs in His dealing with an individual seeker, when in conversation with Nicodemus He claimed that He had been sent by God, and then in every successive chapter in the Gospel of John up to and including the seventeenth, the chapter of the great intercessory prayer, He is perpetually recorded as alluding to the fact that He was the Sent of the Father. In chapters eighteen and nineteen, which deal with His sor-

[1] Luke xix. 10. [2] Matt. x. 40. [3] Luke x. 16.

rows, and are characterized by comparative silence, that fact is not mentioned; and the last occurrence is in chapter twenty. This brings clearly before the mind the fact that in the common speech of Christ we have a revelation of the fact, both definitely declared, and incidentally referred to, that He wrought and spoke as One claiming to have been sent into the world by God Himself.

In each case, both in these references to the fact of His having been sent, and in His references to the fact that He came into the world, the implication is that of His pre-existence. All His speech has in it that tone and that emphasis. Whereas in certain matters He spoke, as we have seen in an earlier study, in terms which must be described as temporal, or of an age, He far more often spoke in terms which were eternal, or of all the ages; and in these He either described Himself as the Sent of God, or as coming into the world, thereby claiming a prior existence.

All these declarations reveal a definite purpose, as the explanation of His advent. He was here for a purpose, sent of God for a definite mission. He came for the fulfillment of that mission. We shall confine ourselves here to certain outstanding words in which He spoke of Himself as having come, and in which He declared the purpose of His coming, and revealed the method by which He would accomplish that purpose.

There are four outstanding declarations as to purpose; all made before Cæsarea Philippi, the place of Peter's confession, after which our Lord turned to a new and distinct part of His work. There are also four equally definite statements concerning method; all of which were made after Cæsarea Philippi, beyond the hour of Peter's confession, beyond the hour in which Christ unveiled to His disciples two great secrets, first of the Church as the instrument through which He would prepare for the Kingdom, and the Cross as

the one and only method by which it would be possible for Him to build His Church, or to establish His Kingdom.

The first outstanding declaration of Jesus concerning the purpose of His mission is to be found in the Manifesto: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." [1]

The second is to be found in the same Gospel: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." [2] That saying is also recorded by Mark and Luke.

The third is also found in Matthew: "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword!" [3]

And the final reference is found in John's Gospel:

"I am come in My Father's name, and ye receive Me not." [4]

In the first claim our Lord declared the ultimate ethical purpose of His presence in the world. This statement is found at the commencement of a brief paragraph, which closes with these words, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." [5] It is of supreme importance that we should recognize that this is Christ's first word as to the purpose of His mission in the world. The evangelical presentation of the Gospel has led some astray from this, or has made them unmindful of it. The first purpose, the ultimate purpose, the passion of His heart, was the establishment of the law of God, and the creation in men of a character of holiness which should issue in a conduct of righteousness. The ultimate purpose of the mission of Christ is thus revealed to be ethical; and that according to this word of Jesus, and the whole of His teaching harmonizes with it, He did not come into this

[1] Matt. v. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, ix. 13. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 34. [4] John v. 43. [5] Matt. v. 20.

world to persuade God to excuse men who are moral failures. He came into the world to establish the law, to make it honourable; to stand in the midst of human history as the severest of all moral teachers, embodying the highest ideal of law, and at all costs insisting upon obedience thereto. In that ultimate triumph of Christ, when He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, and in those who have been ransomed and redeemed shall find the fulfillment of His highest purpose, He will not lead into the larger life a great host of men and women crippled and incapable, without spiritual power, and defective in moral character. When His work is done in His own, He will present them to His Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, absolutely perfect, with the perfection of His own holiness of character and righteousness of conduct. I came not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill. The master-passion of the heart of Christ was ethical, holy, righteous; and the very first word in which He made any statement concerning His mission in the world was a word in which He insisted upon this fact.

But had He said nothing else I should have had no Gospel. That is not the Gospel. It is preliminary to the Gospel. It is a revelation of the ultimate value of the Gospel; but it is not the Gospel. He came and He gave the world His ethic in that great Manifesto, which so many men are admiring, but which so few men will dare try to obey; that Manifesto from which it is the fashion of the hour to deduce certain social values, in order that we may attempt to realize them, but which men seem to forget is introduced by words thrilling with tenderness, and yet vibrant with the thunder of an awful holiness, as the great moral Teacher,—if you speak of Jesus as being such—puts at the forefront of His Manifesto the absolute necessity for character. But that is not the Gospel. If I have

nothing other than the Sermon on the Mount I have no Gospel to preach.

The second of these words, in the light of this high declaration concerning ultimate ethical purpose, is the more amazing and the more arresting. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."[1] They declare His immediate redeeming purpose.

Jesus was upon this occasion defending Himself against the criticism of those who did not understand His attitude towards sinning men. He sat down and ate with publicans and sinners; and He violated tradition as He did so with unwashen hands. He made Himself, most evidently, the personal, near, close companion of sinning men; and the moralists of His day, whose only conception of morality was that it must be maintained by absolute separation from all sinning men, in habits and in social life, looked with amazement at Him, and they criticized Him; and He answered their criticism by saying, "They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. . . . I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." In that statement He explained the meaning of His companionship with sinning men. He revealed the fact that the passion of His heart for them was that of the physician. Now there are two things that the illustration connotes. The physician is needed when there is disease; but the passion of the physician is for health. So that the first principle is not violated in the second. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. I have come to take hold of the morally and spiritually sick, and make them well; that is the immediate purpose of My presence in the world; and if there are men who are righteous, and have no moral malady, no spiritual sickness, I have no message for them.

Now that is a very astonishing thing, but it is our Lord's

[1] Matt. ix. 13.

own teaching. If you are righteous, having no spiritual malady, no spiritual sickness, Christ has no message for you. I leave that matter for application in the loneliness of the inner life of every man and woman; only before we decide as to whether we have moral malady, or spiritual sickness, let this Physician examine us, and He will do it with that selfsame Manifesto, that ethical standard that is not satisfied with an external uprightness unless there be an absolute heart purity. When He has examined the life, if we can stand erect and say, we have no malady, then He will say to us: I have no message for you.

Few of us will escape the conviction of need if we let Him deal with us. But here is the Gospel, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners"; I came,—whatever that may include of self-emptying, and stooping in humility, and a long pathway of suffering and sorrow,—to call sinners.

The next words are, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword!"[1] Here we specially need all the context or we shall surely be mistaken as to our Lord's meaning. He was insisting upon the absolute necessity of loyalty to Him. Remember He came with an ultimate ethical purpose in His heart. He came also with an immediate redeeming purpose. Now if the incompetent man, the broken man, the man who has failed morally, is to receive healing, health, holiness, to realize the Divine purpose; that man must unreservedly and absolutely put himself under the guidance and direction and rule of Jesus. There must be no affection allowed to interfere, no earthly tie must restrain, no passion or pride of the self-life must be permitted to hinder. The right hand must be cut off, and cast away; the right eye must be plucked out; neither father, mother, nor child

[1] Matt. x. 34.

must be loved more than He, or we are not worthy of Him. These are the severest terms that it is possible for us to imagine; and therefore there must be a separating process; not peace, but a sword. This is merely a description of a process, a declaration of what must inevitably happen if men will follow Him absolutely, in order that He may heal them perfectly, and fulfill His high purpose within them; and so at the commencement, that there may be no mistake, He said, "not peace, but a sword." If we are conscious of moral malady, of spiritual sickness, and come to this great Physician, Whose ultimate purpose is our health of soul, and Whose immediate purpose is the redemption that shall produce that health, then we must give ourselves to Him entirely, absolutely; and to do this will divide households, will separate between parents and children, between brothers and sisters. Our Lord was simply stating the fact, and there is no need for me to argue it. He came to send a sword; and He has done it through all the centuries, He is doing it still. There are those who know the keenness of it; instead of peace, there is indeed a sword. His mission was one of separation in order to the creation of the new, pure, strong, ransomed society, for the accomplishment of His purposes in the economy of God.

The last of these four outstanding declarations taken alone is full of beauty, but we miss the true light unless we consider it in its relation to the story of the man who had lain for so long in the porches of the Bethesda pool. Christ healed him, and when the rulers criticized Jesus for making the man break Sabbath, our Lord answered, "My Father worketh even until now, and I work;" [1] and the discussion ran to an argument, a defense, an explanation; and in that connection this word occurred, "I am come in My Father's name." [2] For the meaning of this word then, we

[1] John v. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 43.

need the story itself, and His interpretation of what He did when He healed the man; and we need that interpretation in the light of the criticism which was offered.

This man, for eight and thirty years, had been in the grip of an infirmity, until he had lost heart and lost hope, and had become despondently contented,—if that be not a contradiction of terms—with his condition. Jesus, passing through, looked at him, and said, Do you wish to be made whole? And the man replied, Sir,—and I never can read it without feeling there was a touch of protest in it, as though he had said, Sir, why do you ask me a question like that?—When the water is troubled, and I try to reach it, some man is in front of me, and I have no man that can put me in. What did that answer mean? It surely was as if he had said, Of course I wish to be made whole, but I never can be made whole. Why do you mock my impotence? It is too late, and I have to be content to live upon the almsgiving of others, with no hope of healing. Then came the word of Christ to him, "Take up thy bed, and walk." And he arose and took up his bed and walked; a material miracle with a moral value; but the blind men about Him could not interpret the moral value, and they charged Christ with violating God's law by making that man break the Sabbath. Christ said in effect: You charge Me with breaking Sabbath, but God's Sabbath was broken by man's sin, and God can have no Sabbath while men lie like this one, broken and bruised. "My Father worketh," was His answer to the charge that He had broken Sabbath; "My Father worketh" was an unveiling of the Divine discontent in the presence of all human limitation and suffering; of the restlessness of God until man gets his rest; "My Father worketh . . . and I work." Then presently and in direct connection He said, "I am come in My Father's name." Thus was the purpose of God unveiled

in the action of Jesus; God's determination to make rest for man, and His willingness to give up His rest in order to do so. I know the figure halts. I know it is imperfect. Incarnation itself is imperfect as a full unveiling of Deity; but it is perfect in that it meets the need of humanity. There is a sense in which it is unthinkable that God can have His rest interfered with; but there is a deeper sense, a profounder sense, in which it is true that God is not impassive, or indifferent in the presence of human pain and sorrow and agony. "My Father worketh." [1] "I am come in My Father's name." [2] Jesus came in the name of God Who will never be able to rest, save as men find rest in health and holiness, and the realization of all the highest purposes of their being.

The central word in each of these declarations is the statement, "I am come," indicating as it does His preëxistence; and that, in connection with the affirmations made, reveals that the ultimate purpose of His mission was the establishment of righteousness; the immediate purpose of His mission was the redemption of the man who has failed, who is broken, who has been flung out upon the world's scrap heap; the necessary processional purpose of His mission was the separation between men, in order to the creation of a great society; and the fundamental purpose of His mission was that of the carrying out of the enterprises of God.

And now reverently let us turn to the second consideration; the words of Jesus spoken as to the method by which He will establish righteousness; redeem the sinner; creating in the process, not peace but conflict; until at last the heart of God shall find rest. All His words on this subject were uttered after Cæsarea Philippi. After Peter had made his great confession concerning the person of the Lord, He began to speak to His disciples definitely and plainly about

[1] John v. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, v. 43.

His Cross. Both Matthew, Mark, and Luke give the account of the confession of Peter, and they all record that immediately following that confession He began this teaching. Matthew and Mark use the actual word "began"; Luke does not use that word, but his placing of the commencement at that point is quite distinct.

When He thus began to talk about His Cross the Lord employed a very significant expression as He declared that He *must*,—that is the key word; Mark employs it, Matthew uses it, Luke reports it,—they all quote Him as declaring that He *must* go to Jerusalem, suffer, be killed, and the third day be raised again. The whole of this statement is necessary to an understanding of the Lord's meaning. It is not accurate to say that His foretelling of the Cross was merely the result of spiritual intuition, and His *must*, the expression of a fine heroism by which He yielded to death. His was not the heroism of One consenting to be a victim, for He never spoke of the Cross without speaking of the resurrection which lay beyond; it was rather the heroism of a determined Victor, Who was moving through a dark and awful process, towards a bright and glorious victory. He never spoke of the Cross without the resurrection; but when He first spoke of these He used this word *must*. Thus He declared that it was necessary that He should go to Jerusalem. It was in the economy of His mission that He went. The Cross was no accident. On the day of Pentecost, Peter, in the first Spirit-taught exposition of the Cross, said, "Him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay."[1] Man's guilt was patent, but behind it, around it, overruling it, was something mightier than man's guilt; it was God's grace. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The *must*

[1] Acts ii. 23.

of Jesus was not the outcome of His sense that circumstances were against Him. The *must* of Jesus was the expression of His sense that He was still working with His Father, and coöperating with the purposes of God.

Now in the light of that *must* at Cæsarea Philippi, let us read the four outstanding words in which He declared the method by which He would accomplish His purpose. The first is to be found in the Gospel according to John: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." [1]

The second is in the Gospel according to Luke: "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I"—what do I desire—"if," and it is the sigh of desire, not a supposition—"Oh, that it were already kindled. But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" [2]

The third is in the Gospel according to Matthew: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." [3]

The final one is again found in the Gospel according to John: "Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." [4]

In these great words in which He referred to His coming, He also revealed the method by which He will accomplish the great purposes already considered.

In the first of these statements He was speaking of the sheep; fleeced, wounded, harried by wolves; and He said, "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd layeth down His life for the sheep" [5] and again, "I lay down My life for the sheep." This was not a repetition, but the revela-

[1] John x. 10. [2] Luke xii. 49, 50. [3] Matt. xx. 28. [4] John xii. 27, 28. [5] *Ibid.*, x. 11. [6] *Ibid.*, x. 15.

tion of a twofold fact. The first was figurative; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep; that is, He dies for them; He grapples with the wolf in order that He may protect the sheep; and He dies in the struggle, but He slays the wolf. But in the second affirmation the figure is transcended, the truth emerges into a larger presentation than the figure can contain. The figure is exhausted when the good Shepherd of human life has fought the wolf and slain it, dying Himself in the struggle. But our good Shepherd says, "No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." [1] I will not merely slay the wolf in My dying, but I will give My life to the sheep in order that they may be able to overcome all the wolves that may attack them. What exposition can there be of such poetry as this? It is poetry itself transcended by the fact of the infinite grace and glory which it attempts to express. The Master came to fulfill law and prophecy, to establish a life in men which shall meet the Divine requirement; but men need a dynamic, and He gives them His life, that the forces of His purity may operate in them; but He could only do this through death. Jesus never attempted to explain the atonement. There is not a single passage in all His teaching that will help us if we are seeking for a theory.

But the fact He declared:

> "He death by dying slew,
> He hell in hell laid low;
> Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so."

By the giving of His life He declared that He would destroy the wolf, and energize the sheep.

Let us turn to the great soliloquy in Luke. I describe it thus because it breaks in upon the continuity of the narrative.

[1] John x. 18.

It was a great heart-burst. "I came to cast fire upon the earth;" fire, the cleansing agent, superior to, and mightier than water. Water can only cleanse superficial things. Fire will penetrate and cleanse thoroughly. "I came to cast fire on the earth." It will be for the cleansing of sinful natures. How can it be done? "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" I cannot scatter this fire; I cannot fulfill My redeeming purpose in the experience of a man, save by the way of My own passion-baptism! Again here is no explanation of profound secrets, no attempt to unveil the mystery of a method deep as the very nature of God; but a clear declaration that only by the way of a passion-baptism could He fulfill His purpose.

The third declaration was: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." He was charging His disciples that they were to enter into new social relationships, that they were to minister to one another, that they were to help each other within the economy of His new spiritual Kingdom. Then He inspired them by His own example as He said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister"; and added to the words of inspiration the revealing word, "and to give His life a ransom for many." Thus He brings the gift of peace into the new family and the new Kingdom, by the giving of His life, and the inspiration of that giving in the lives of other men, as in answer to it they are led to a similar ministry.

The last of these words was uttered in a great triumph of prayer. Jesus was under the very shadow of His Cross, and the Greek enquirers came, asking to see Him. When Philip brought them to Him our Lord said, "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit. . . . Now is My soul

troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour?" He did not say that. What then did He say? "But for this cause came I unto this hour." It was the hour of darkness, the blackness was gathering about His soul, the horror of the coming passion was filling His heart, "What shall I say?" Father, deliver Me from it? No, "Father, glorify Thy name." It was the triumph of One coming into the ultimate coöperation with His Father. The last word in the proclamation of purpose was "I am come in My Father's name." The last word in the unveiling of the method was "Father, glorify Thy name." The answer came in thunder, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." And then, the Cross before Him in determination, He uttered the great words of triumph, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself." This was His final word concerning the method whereby He will establish righteousness, redeem sinning men, and fulfill the purposes of God.

In the correlation of these declarations of purpose, and revelations of method, we have the teaching of Christ concerning His saving mission. The gift of life through death makes possible the fulfillment of ethical purpose. The gift of fire through death makes possible the redemption of sinners, and the healing of souls spiritually sick. The gift of peace through death is at once the inspiration and the realization thereof. The purpose of God realized through the sorrows of death is the way by which His glory is ensured.

What, then, are the conclusions to be drawn from this statement of Christ's own teaching concerning His mission? First, that He came to cure moral malady through death. Secondly, that He came to enable men to live life in harmony with the will of God, and in the fulfillment of His purpose by the bestowment of life out of death. Thirdly,

that He came to separate by a sword in order to establish a final peace, through His death. Finally and inclusively that He came to coöperate with God, and to glorify the name of God through death. Thus He interpreted the purpose and method of His mission in the world.

IV HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*Matthew iv. 17.*

. . . . . .

"Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent."—*John vi. 29.*

"If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself."—*vii. 17.*

IV

HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY

Our subject presupposes those of the two previous chapters and completes their teaching.

We now proceed to enquire what Jesus taught as to human responsibility in view of His Saviourhood.

There are certain preliminary matters which it is well we should bear in mind. The first is that of the general methods of Christ's teaching. As we read these Gospel stories, and listen to Him, sometimes speaking to vast multitudes who were gathered about Him, sometimes speaking to smaller companies of critical and hostile men who were challenging Him, sometimes speaking to companies yet smaller, companies of loyal souls, instructing them in the things of the Kingdom of God; we find under all these different circumstances a consistent method. We may describe that method briefly as being threefold, that of annunciation, application, and appeal.

His teaching was always that of the annunciation of truth. In the midst of the final hours, when challenged by the Roman procurator as to His Kingship, He made a significant claim: "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." [1]

He never announced a truth, however, merely that men might apprehend it intellectually. He always applied truth to immediate circumstances, and to actual needs.

Moreover He never rested content with an annunciation and an application. There always rang through His teach-

[1] John xviii. 37.

ing the note of appeal, as He called men to obey the things that He said.

All of which may be stated in another way by declaring that through all the teaching of Christ there is discoverable an ethical purpose. He taught men, in order that they might be obedient to truth; and that by their obedience to it, they might be conformed to the will and the purpose of God. Consequently it is also noticeable in the teaching of Jesus that His objective was the will. His avenues of approach were those of the emotion and the intellect. He made a clear statement of truth that might be apprehended of the intellect, and employed such methods of statement as would make their appeal to the emotional nature, sometimes in the thunder of awful denunciations, and sometimes in the wooing winsomeness of infinite tenderness. But He never attempted merely to satisfy the questioning of the intellect, or merely to move the emotion. These were but avenues of approach, and He was forevermore storming the central citadel of human personality, the will; calling men by thunder and by tears, by clear intellectual statement and emotional appeal, to obedience; claiming that there must be the submission of the will to the truths declared.

From the mass of His teaching I select three outstanding and familiar statements which reveal the nature of His appeal, and enable us to understand His teaching concerning human responsibility.

It must be remembered that our Lord's ministry was exercised, not in the midst of men and women who, knowing truth, and being obedient to it, were like the truth, and of the truth. His ministry was exercised in the midst of men unlike the truth, disobedient to the revelation, and His appeal was made to those who had failed. That appeal is focused in the three passages selected.

The first is recorded by Matthew and Mark, as consti-

tuting the key-note of His more public ministry. "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." [1]

The second was spoken in Jerusalem in the midst of hostile criticism, when crowds were following Him, as He Himself said, because He had fed them with material bread. He rebuked them for the motive of their following, sought to lift them on to higher levels of consideration, and consequently of conduct; charged them not to work for the bread that perishes, but to work for the bread of life. They answered His charge by the question, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" and to that enquiry, in the midst of that critical atmosphere, He replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." [2]

The third of the three passages is found, as to its place in the Gospel, in the chapter immediately following, but as to its chronological place in the ministry of Christ, at a later period. When He had come up to Jerusalem for that memorable feast of tabernacles, and they were charging Him with bearing testimony to Himself, challenging Him as to the truth of the Divine authority of His mission, He uttered these very significant words: "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching *whether* it be of God;" [3] and I emphasize in that way because I know no passage in the New Testament that has been made the basis of more interesting, and yet unwarranted application than this. Many things are said in exposition of these words which in themselves are quite true, but which are not in the meaning of the words. Jesus did not say, If you do the will you shall know the doctrine, all interpreters and expositors notwithstanding. He said, "If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching *whether it be of God.*"

In these three statements, taken out of the midst of our

[1] Matt. iv. 17. Mark i. 15. [2] John vi. 28, 29. [3] John vii. 17.

Lord's ministry, we have a revelation of human responsibility in the presence of Himself as the Revealer of the will of God, and as the Saviour of men. In the first we find a revelation of the fundamental necessity, repentance towards the Kingdom of God; in the second, a revelation of responsibility created by Himself as the mediating Opportunity, faith in Himself; in the third, His most luminous and wonderful statement as to the responsibility of experimental proof; that men are to prove the Divinity of His teaching, the Divine authority of Himself and His mission, by putting Him to the test by obedience.

Let us examine these declarations a little more particularly. First we have His statement of fundamental necessity in the words, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."

With these words the herald John had commenced his ministry; and when he was arrested and imprisoned, and his voice was silenced, then began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent. That in itself is suggestive. Men may silence a voice by imprisoning a prophet, but they cannot end the ministry of truth. Another voice will take up the same word, and now no longer the voice of a herald, but the voice of the King.

The implications of this great word are two, those of the rights of God, and the rebellion of man.

There was a clear indication, both in the first word of John and in the first word of Jesus, of the direction of repentance; it must be repentance towards the Kingdom of God. Thus at the commencement of His ministry, our Lord insisted upon the rights of God. The deepest passion of His heart was a passion for the doing of God's will in His own life, and the establishment of God's Kingdom throughout the world; He insisted upon the rights of God over individual life in its entirety, over social life in all its inter-relationships, over national life in its purposes and its

policies. The vision ever flaming before His eyes was that of the Kingship of God, the rights of God over all the affairs of men.

The second implication of this key word of the Master's preaching is that man is not living within that kingdom consciously, obediently; that he is out of harmony with the will of God. Our Lord charged the men of His own age with having wrong conceptions, which issued in wrong conduct, which resulted in wrong character. He stood in the midst of the men of His own age, and He said to them in effect: The fundamental necessity, if I am to exercise My power as Saviour, and to accomplish My mission in the world, is that men shall turn to the Kingdom of God. His call essentially was and is, that men shall enthrone the exiled God.

That is the first note of human responsibility. It is revolutionary, calling for upheaval and change in all the departments of human life. It is radical in that it deals with the inspirational sources of action, rather than with the external activities. It is restorative in that it calls man to return to the true order of his own life and of his own being. It is the key-note.

There is no Gospel in this. John had no Gospel to preach; he preached repentance. But no man is ready for the Gospel until he has heard this; and no man can receive the benefit which the Gospel provides until he has obeyed this fundamental word. If there has been a lack in the evangelistic preaching of recent years, it has been that this note has been forgotten, that in bringing men face to face with their responsibility to Jesus Christ, we have not commenced where He commenced, where the apostles commenced after Pentecost, where every great revival of religion has commenced, with the need of repentance, the need that is founded upon the rights of God in individual, social, and national human life.

This, then, is the first note of human responsibility, repentance towards the Kingdom of God. Repentance is the change of the mind, the thinking over again; and the thinking in this definite direction. In this particular word that our Lord made use of, there is no suggestion of sorrow, of tears, or of penitence. There was long controversy between the Protestant and the Roman theologians as to the difference between *resipiscentia* and *pœnetentia;* Catholic theologians insisting that what is necessary is sorrow for the past; Protestant theologians asserting that the essential thing is the change of mind towards the Kingdom of God. There can be no doubt in the light of the New Testament that the latter were right. There will be sorrow for sin, but it is not necessary to initial repentance; and there are men and women who for twenty, thirty, and forty years, have been Christians, whose sorrow for sin to-day is deeper than it was at the beginning of their Christian life. Moreover there may be sorrow for sin without repentance. People may mourn and wail over sin, who never definitely change the mind, and set the life towards the Kingdom of God by making that Kingdom the master conception in everything.

That a man must enthrone at the centre of his life the God Who has been exiled therefrom is the first note in Christ's teaching concerning human responsibility in the presence of Himself and His mission as Saviour.

Then we turn to the next. Men asked Him, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" and His reply was definite, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent." We are immediately impressed by the superlative nature of that claim. Jesus Christ stood confronting the men of light and learning of His own age, and He said that the work of God was that they should believe on Him. He had rebuked them for the materialism of their thinking, and their passion, and

their motive, declaring that they had followed Him, not even because they saw the sign, but because they had been fed. He charged them to lift their life on to the higher and the spiritual plane, and to work for spiritual food, and they had said, What is the work of God? Having called them to such high altitude and conception of life, He immediately said, This is the work of God that you believe on Me.

Thus He stands before men as between them and God; He calls men to the Kingdom, to repent towards the Kingdom; and when they come with enquiry as to how they are to do this, He answers, This is the work of God that you believe in Me. He claims in that word relation to the fundamental purpose of the Kingdom; that the King is revealed in Himself, that the Kingdom is revealed in Himself; and that He is not merely the revelation of the King and the Kingdom, but the Administrator of the Kingdom. He was sent from God, not merely to show the glory of God, but to deal with the rebels, the sinners, the men who had forgotten the Kingdom, and insulted the Throne, and to deal with them for reconciliation and restoration. His call is to belief in Himself; not to belief about Him, not to belief of any doctrine or theory of His Person. Not only is it true that men are not saved by holding a theory; it is equally true that He never on any single occasion made it necessary that a man should hold any theory concerning Him; but that men should believe in Him. That Greek preposition *eis*, with the accusative, always signifies motion into; so that perhaps we should be nearer the word of Christ if we read, That you should believe *into* Him Whom He hath sent. That lifts belief far higher than the intellectual realm, making it a volitional act by which a man abandons himself to the truth of which he is convinced. There are men who question as to whether it is possible to choose their beliefs. There are senses in which it is not.

No man can choose a conviction. He can choose whether he will act upon a conviction. Conviction is necessary to faith; but faith is more than conviction; it is conviction followed. I recommend a very careful study of Professor James's essay on "The Will to Believe,"[1] in its bearing on the fact perpetually insisted upon in the Bible that belief is more than conviction, it is the activity that proceeds out of conviction, and harmonizes with conviction. The unbelief which robs a man of peace, and power, and prevents him coming into living association with Christ is not intellectual doubt or intellectual difficulty. The unbelief that shuts a man away from Christ is that man's refusal to act upon the conviction that has gripped his soul. And consequently the belief that saves is an action of the will, a decision to act upon a conclusion reached. That is the work of God. It is the initial work of God, because Christ was the Sent of God, God's new point of departure in human history; and as men accept that fact and yield to Him, they are working the work of God. The Kingdom of God is revealed in Christ, as to its King, and as to its laws; and is administered by Christ through the mystery of His work for saving men; and as men believe into Him and yield to Him, they work the work of God. That is the action that brings men into touch with all the redemptive forces which He has provided for their remaking.

The final words meet a difficulty which is often presented, and our Lord was perfectly clear about it. It has to do with the question of proof. Jesus was in Jerusalem, and the men of light and leading, who in this were quite sincere, had listened to Him, and had said, Whence hath this man the letters, the *grammata*, never having learned? They recognized the note of the schools of learning, and they said, How did He obtain it? They were questioning His

[1] "The Will to Believe," First Essay.

authority, and found themselves face to face with a scholastic problem. To that enquiry He replied: "My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself." If with all reverence I may change the words of Christ, in an attempt to interpret the spirit of them, He said: You men who are trying to solve the mystery of the *grammata* which you have detected in My teaching, hear this; you have been listening, not to human wisdom, but to eternal truth, which God has given Me to speak to men. If you are face to face with difficulty about Me, then put what I say to the test of doing it; and if you will thus obey the thing I say, even though you are in intellectual difficulty about Me, you will find that the thing I say is of God, and not of Myself.

This is a supreme word. This is Christ's challenge to all men, men of scholarly attainments, men of intellectual difficulties, men who are holding aloof from the Christian fact because they cannot place the Christian Saviour. To all such He says, Postpone your discussion concerning My Person; do what I tell you; and in the doing you will discover whether what I say is Divine or human. In effect Christ says, I am content to abide by that proof in the case of the human soul.

No man has ever accepted that challenge of Jesus Christ honestly, and yielded himself to it completely, without the issue being that presently,—not immediately perhaps, for the spectres of the mind are not laid immediately—but presently, the man so obeying has to come back to the Christ, saying with Thomas, "My Lord and my God."[1] Only there must be no trifling with the condition. There must be obedience to the things He says. What is the first? Repent towards the Kingdom of God. And I will content

[1] John xx. 28.

myself with that. Christ stands confronting men and He says, Your conceptions are wrong. They are self-centred, materialized, earthly, mean. Change your mind. Put God upon the throne, believe in Him, seek His will, conform your life volitionally to His holiness; repent towards His government. And then He, representing God, calls men to trust Him, to let Him lead them step by step, to let Him interpret to them the meaning of the will of God; He asks them to receive from Him, with the humility of children, grace that will enable them to obey.

Do you say

> "Dim tracts of time divide?"

Then I ask you,

> "Can time undo what once was true?"

In this very hour, face the Christ, and say, I cannot make up my mind about Thee, O Christ. I am not certain whether these theologians and schoolmen and expositors are right; but I am coming after Thee, to put Thy teaching to the test of obedience. If you will do so, then I shall meet you on some fair morning in this world or the next, and you will say, I proved Him by my obedience, and at last I crowned Him my Lord and my God.

Repentance towards God; faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ; and that obedience which is the issue of repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ; are, according to the teaching of Christ, the conditions upon fulfillment of which men may appropriate the perfect salvation of the perfect Saviour.

V. SANCTITY

"For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven."—*Matthew v. 20.*

"Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them: else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven."—*v. 48–vi. 1.*

. . . . . .

"Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee."

"I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they know that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are from Thee: for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."

"Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth."—*John xvii. 1, 6–8, 17.*

V

SANCTITY

Our theme is that of the teaching of Christ concerning sanctity. Our Lord had been speaking to His disciples in the upper room in view of His departure, giving them those teachings which we now speak of as the Paschal discourses. Ceasing to teach, He began to pray; and in this seventeenth chapter of John we have the words of that great Paschal prayer, offered in anticipation of the Cross. They are a revelation of His purpose for the men whom He had been teaching, and who were gathered about Him. He prayed here, as He ever prayed, alone, while yet in their presence. They were sinning men, some of the men whom He had come to seek and to save. He was to them the Saviour; not that they at the moment perfectly understood the meaning of His mission, or fully apprehended all the results thereof; but that He stood to them in His own purpose and in His own power, in that sacred relationship. If they were sinning men they were also men who had fulfilled the responsibilities which He had revealed. They were men who had repented towards the Kingdom of God, and men who had believed in Him; they did not understand His teaching perfectly, had no final truth in their mind concerning the mystery of His Person, and were certainly quite ignorant of that passion towards which His face was set, for they were in rebellion against the very thought thereof. Nevertheless, they had believed in Him, and by that belief had appropriated values far greater than they themselves did know; and He prayed for these men, and in the brief words of this particular verse we have the ultimate word express-

ive of His desire for them, "Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth." [1]

Sanctification,—or preferably because not so common,—the word sanctity, already used, is the ultimate word in salvation. We have been considering the teaching of our Lord on these co-related themes; sin as constituting the need for salvation; salvation as the supply of that need in the economy of God; salvation interpreted by our Lord's use of the word; salvation as the purpose of His mission in the world; salvation as to the human responsibilities which this provision creates.

Now we come to consider the issue of salvation, which is sanctity. That is the ultimate word concerning salvation. If I may borrow the great words of the Roman letter;—justification, sanctification, and glorification,—I would remind you that justification is the root; glorification will be the ultimate fruit; while the supreme experience of the present life, which is in itself a fulfillment of those conditions whereby the root shall proceed to the ultimate fruit, is that of sanctity. The will of our Lord for His people is that they may live the life of sanctity, that they may know the experience of sanctification. These words of Jesus constitute a brief petition in which we have our Lord's teaching concerning sanctity suggestively revealed, when the petition is interpreted by the context of the whole prayer. He prayed that these men might be sanctified in the truth, and He immediately revealed what He meant by His own term, "the truth," as He said, "Thy Word is truth." We are led therefore to enquire what He meant when He said, "Thy Word." If we have the interpretation of the term "the truth" in the term "Thy Word," then we enquire what He meant, when in that great prayer under the shadow of the Cross, amid the silence of the consecrated

[1] John xvii. 17.

hour, He spoke of the Word of God. If we go back to the earlier part of the prayer we shall find our answer. It is recorded that He said, "I manifested Thy name unto the men whom Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them to Me; and they have kept Thy word."[1] We immediately recognize the connection between the opening statement of that verse, and the closing one; between "I have manifested Thy name" and "They have kept Thy word." When He spoke therefore of the *truth*, and defined it as being the *Word* of God, He was, according to the interpretation of His own uttered words, referring to that manifestation of God which He had made, and which He described as the manifestation of the Name.

And yet again we have further light in the statement: "The words which Thou gavest Me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me."[2]

In these two statements we have two expressions of our Lord, arresting our attention, and enabling us to understand His thought concerning sanctity. He spoke of *the Word of God*, and when He so spoke He referred to a manifestation of *the name of God*, which He said He had given to these men. This is the great word with which we are familiar through all the writings of John, and indeed through all our New Testament, the word *logos*, signifying the unified and complete revelation of God made through Christ Himself. That, fundamentally and inclusively, is the truth in which He prays that men may be sanctified. In the second statement we have not the same expression, but another carrying another thought: My sayings, that is, such sayings as make application of essential truth in local particulars. It when He spoke of *the Word* He was referring to the unified and inclusive truth; when He spoke of *the sayings*, He was

[1] John xvii. 6. [2] John xvii. 8.

referring to the words which He had uttered in application to certain human needs.

We shall understand our Lord's thoughts concerning sanctity in proportion as we know the truth to which He referred when He prayed that we might be sanctified in the truth. For that purpose we shall consider that matter under the twofold division of *the Word* as the manifestation of the name; and *the sayings* as the application of truth, included in the Word, to the needs of men.

The manifestation of the name producing the right attitude to God issues in sanctity of being, which is holiness. The revelation of duty producing right attitude to men issues in sanctity of doing, which is righteousness. Sanctity is holiness and righteousness, two matters which cannot be severed; two matters which I sometimes fear we are in danger of severing. On one hand, I hear a great deal about holiness, with little reference to righteousness. On the other hand, I hear a great deal about the necessity for righteousness, with very little reference to holiness. But it is impossible that there ever should be righteousness which is not the outcome of holiness; and it is equally impossible that there should be any holiness which is not expressed in righteousness. Holiness is rectitude of character. Righteousness is rectitude of conduct. Both the ideas are related, and are expressed most perfectly in the word sanctity.

Our Lord in this great prayer uttered His ultimate desire for the sinning men who by faith in Him as Saviour enter into new relationship with God. His desire for them is, that they may be sanctified in the truth. We turn first of all to the study of sanctity of character by the Name; and secondly to sanctity of conduct by the sayings, or moral system, which our Lord has given to us.

We commence then with this first conception of truth,

"Thy word is truth."[1] "I manifested Thy name unto the men."[2] Now to understand this we must take a larger outlook, and remind ourselves of the method and system of this Gospel according to John. It is not a life story, a biography. It is exactly what John declared it to be, the gathering together of certain incidents, of signs in the way of works; of teaching in the form of words; which in their relationship to each other serve to demonstrate the fact that Jesus was the Son of God.

When that is borne in mind we shall discover at the commencement of the Gospel a key to the interpretation of the revelation which Jesus gave to us, and which John made clear in the process of his book: "The law was given by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."[3] John was looking back to a past economy, in order that he might draw attention to the new economy. He was reminding those for whom he wrote his Gospel of a previous revelation, of how the law came,—the preposition "by" is a very unfortunate one,—"through Moses"; and how—for there was a new revelation, not contradicting the old, but fulfilling it, explaining it, leading out its essential values to ultimate perfection,—"grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." I have referred to that key word in order that we may go back to the previous revelation. "The law came by Moses." What was the first word in that law? Not a moral enactment, but a revelation of God. When after eighty years of preparation, forty years in Egypt, and forty years in the magnificence of the desert, Moses came to the hour of crisis, and was called to his great work, he was called by the mystic symbolism of a bush that burned with fire and was not consumed, and by a revelation of the God Who dwelt in the bush. As this man Moses, of reverent habit and demeanour, who had learned deep secrets from Nature during the forty years of his shepherd life, drew

[1] John xvii. 17. [2] *Ibid.*, xvii. 6. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 17.

near to the unusual sight of a bush burning with fire and yet not consumed, a voice said to him, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." [1] Then God revealed Himself to him by a name; and this is the name, a name which is an announcement of revelation, imperfect, incomplete, "I AM"; and as it appeared as though something were to be added to the essential word, by way of revelation, the word recoiled upon itself. "I AM, THAT I AM." [2] The law came through the man who had received that revelation.

Now I take up this Gospel according to John, and having read that key word, "The law came by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," I find that its supreme value is not its revelation of an ethical code, but its revelation of a name, its revelation of how through this new Messenger of the covenant, the very Son of God Himself, the name was proclaimed; and this prayer of Jesus bears witness to the truth of that assertion, for in the final praying He said to His Father, "I have manifested Thy name." What then is the name? That name is revealed in the course of the discourses of Jesus, some of them careful and continued, some of them fragmentary and incidental, in which we find great words, characterized at once by sublimity and simplicity. The words to which I refer are those in which He took again the word that had been spoken incompletely from the splendour of the burning bush, "I AM," and completed the revelation, "I am the Bread of life," [3] "I am the light of the world," [4] "I am the Door," [5] "I am the good Shepherd," [6] "I am the resurrection, and the life," [7] "I am the way, and the truth, and the life," [8] "I am the true Vine." [9] Thus He linked the sublime declaration of essential Being

[1] Exod. iii. 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, iii. 14.
[3] John vi. 35.
[4] *Ibid.*, viii. 12.
[5] *Ibid.*, x. 9.
[6] *Ibid.*, x. 11.
[7] *Ibid.*, xi. 25.
[8] *Ibid.*, xiv. 6.
[9] *Ibid.*, xv. 1.

to symbols so full of simplicity that all our children love them; the simplest words of human speech. "I am"; the formula of the fundamental fact in the nature of Deity, that God is the Self-existent One, without beginning and without support other than that within His own Being; Jesus linked to every-day symbols;—bread, light, a door, a shepherd, a resurrection, a way, a vine. When His ministry of teaching was complete, the One Who had uttered these words came into the presence of the Father, Who bears the essential and eternal name, and He said: "I have manifested Thy name unto these men."

That manifestation may thus be summarized:

"I am the bread of life."[1] God Himself as the very bread of life to man.

"I am the light of the world;"[2] God Himself as the illumination of man's life and pathway.

"I am the door."[3] God Himself as the safety of His people.

"I am the good Shepherd." God Himself as the Love that cares for His people.

"I am the resurrection and the life."[5] God Himself as the power by which men shall come to the consummation of purpose, and that in spite of the tragedy of death which results from their sin.

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life;"[6] God Himself as the very pathway or course in which men shall proceed in order to the fulfillment of that purpose.

"I am the vine."[7] God Himself in intimate association with men, making their ministry, perfecting them, and enabling them to fulfill high and holy service.

This was the sevenfold unveiling of the Name, and we at once discover its value to men. "I am the bread of life"—that is, ability at the disposal of men. "I am the

[1] John vi. 35. [3] *Ibid.*, x. 9. [5] *Ibid.*, xi. 25. [7] *Ibid.*, xv. 1.
[2] *Ibid.*, viii. 12. [4] *Ibid.*, x. 11. [6] *Ibid.*, xiv. 6.

light"—that is, light or direction upon the pathway for men. "I am the door"—that is, love, perfect safety for men folded within the enclosure. "I am the good Shepherd"—that is, care, and perfect rest for all hearts who trust in Him. "I am the resurrection"—that is, consummation, hope upon the darkest day of sorrow and bereavement. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"; that is the course or the pathway of the pilgrimage, and consequent confidence even when the sun is blotted out of the heavens. "I am the true vine"; that is provision for ministry or service, discipline and purging, in order that much fruit may be brought forth.

Such was the manifestation of the name, and in every case it was manifestation through Himself. In every case He was, in human guise and form and fashion, the unveiling of Deity; and as men touched the warm flesh of the Son of Man they were thrilled by contact with God through the Son of God. And now at the end He said, "I have manifested Thy name." . . . "I have given them Thy word . . . sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth." And of these men He said, "They have kept Thy word"—that is, they have kept it in view, they have observed it.

What, then, is this picture of sanctity? It is that of sanctity of character by the Name. This revelation produces love in the heart of a believer; love inspires obedience to the things revealed; and, almost without consciousness at first, when the revelation has inspired love, and love has inspired obedience, character becomes holy, because the life is adjusted to the truth concerning God. Holiness is not something which we can accurately designate by the impersonal pronoun *it*. Holiness of character is the attitude of life adjusted towards God in response to the revelation of the Name through Jesus Christ our Lord.

We now pass to the second matter; sanctity of conduct in response to the sayings of Jesus. All the things to which

we have referred constitute the inclusive, unified, final revelation. He is the I AM. Now out of the "I am" of Jesus came His sayings. Sayings are component parts of the whole, uttered for the instruction of individual lives, and social conditions, and immediate requirements. Christ in Himself is the full and final Truth; and even if He had never uttered a precept or a maxim, He had uttered all Truth in Himself. Nevertheless because of the frailty of human life and the finiteness of the human mind, He, the essential Truth, did speak in sayings, in maxims, in instructions; and the supreme collection is to be found, not in John's Gospel, but in Matthew's, in the Manifesto. The Manifesto is less than the King; all truth is not in the Sermon on the Mount; but it is in the One Who uttered it. But the Sermon on the Mount must be uttered in order that I may be helped in my desire to obey the truth, the revelation of which has called me to the character of holiness, in order that I may express the character of holiness in the conduct of righteousness. He spoke in sayings, in words, in moral and ethical terms; and if we would understand what the sayings of Jesus are, then we must take the whole of the Manifesto, and study it carefully.

There are two master principles which occur in the midst of it: "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven";[1] "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."[2] Gathered around these two principles, are words of direct and immediate application; conditioning individual life, and social life; and revealing the moral standards of the Kingdom of God.

Take the first. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." The contextual interpretation shows that this is rightness towards men and the affairs of this life, as the outcome of right re-

[1] Matt. v. 20. [2] Matt. v. 48.

lationship with God. The failure of the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees is revealed in an incidental saying of Jesus in the course of the Manifesto: "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them."[1] That is an illuminative word, it is a startling word. Bring the ordinary morality of the world into the light of that word, and it stands condemned. Rightness, in order that we may be thought well of by men, is condemned in the Christian economy, not in itself, but as being relatively worthless. There is a vast amount of morality which is conditioned by the presence of the policeman; and there is still a vaster amount of morality, on a higher level judged by the ordinary standards of human life, which is conditioned by pride. It is very valuable for all merely material purposes, but it is condemned. Honesty is the best policy! But the man who is honest merely because it is politic to be honest is a rogue and a rascal at heart. That is the righteousness which the Lord condemned; the righteousness which is done to be seen of men. What, then, is the righteousness that He inculcated? The righteousness which is done to be seen of God; to please God whether men understand or not; whether it shall please men or not. His illustrations are as remarkable as His ideal. Alms are to be given, and prayer is to be offered privately; and in fasting men are to go amid the crowds as though they had been to a feast, with brightness upon their faces.

The second principle is expressed in the words, "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." We must not interfere with that saying of Jesus. Some people are terribly afraid of criticism, higher or lower, but they indulge in it for themselves when they read that word. Let us interpret the text in relation to its context. When did He say it? Immediately after He had said

[1] Matt. vi. 1.

"Love your enemies." The second principle of man's relationship to his fellow men is that he is to act towards them by likeness to God in love. The command is thus superlative, rather than minimized by its connection with the command to love our enemies.

This is sanctity of conduct. Love for the Lord inspires us to receive His word, to accept it as authoritative, as final; and the reception of the word thus expresses itself in obedience, which is conduct love-impulsed. Thus righteousness is life adjusted to the truth about God, expressing itself in conduct towards men.

"Sanctify them in the truth: Thy word is truth." This is the word which He gave; the manifestations of the Name, the sayings which He uttered; these constitute the moral code which men must obey. "Sanctify them in the truth." That was His prayer. And His estimate of sanctification is that holiness of character which results from the soul responsive to God as revealed in Christ; and that righteousness of conduct which grows from such character, the expression of relationship to God in a man's dealings with his fellow men.

Finally this teaching was included in a prayer. He was praying for these men, and in the selfsame prayer He prayed for us. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word."[1] We are of that host and company who have believed through the apostolic word. The ultimate value of His prayer is found in the opening words, "Father, the hour is come." What hour? And again there need not be and must not be any speculation. Throughout this Gospel according to John, that hour is constantly referred to. When His mother came to Him at the first sign, He said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."[2] They could not arrest Him "because His hour was not yet come."[3]

[1] John xvii. 20. [2] *Ibid.*, ii. 4. [3] *Ibid.*, viii. 20.

At last, under the very shadow of the Cross, He said, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee." [1]

The hour was the hour of His passion. He was praying first for continued fellowship on the part of His Father with Himself in that ultimate darkness of the Cross, and the victory of the resurrection that lay beyond; and in that prayer He uttered this petition. That first petition of the prayer was answered. His Father glorified Him by raising Him from among the dead, by completing the Exodus; and now we can go through that answer of death and resurrection in the person of our Lord Himself, and therefore sanctity is possible to us. Had there been none other than the manifestation of the name in a life, and the uttering of the law in precepts, I should have closed the book and should have said, The ideal is stupendous and marvellous, but I can never attain unto it. But the One Who manifested the name, the One Who uttered the moral code, was glorified in the mystery of death and resurrection; and placed all His resources at the disposal of sinful men, that they might live the life of sanctity, that they might turn to God, and their life be adjusted to Him in holiness; that in the power of such adjustment they might turn back to the affairs of everyday life, in office and mart and shop and household, and wherever they may be, to live towards men in love, in answer to the impulse of the life adjusted towards God, which is the life of righteousness.

[1] John xvii. 1.

C. THE TEACHING OF CHRIST CONCERNING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTION

"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*Matthew iv. 17.*

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."—*vi. 9, 10.*

"Seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—*vi. 33.*

"The Kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*x. 7.*

"Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."—*xi. 3–5.*

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."—*xi. 12.*

"If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."—*xii. 28.*

. . . . . .

"The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe in the Gospel."—*Mark i. 15.*

. . . . . .

"The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."—*Luke x. 9.*

. . . . . .

"Nicodemus came unto Him by night, and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—*John iii. 2–5.*

"Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."—*xiv. 25.*

THE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTION

THE vastness of this subject will at once be recognized, and its immediate interest conceded. To deal with it exhaustively is not my purpose, but rather to survey the teaching in outline, by grouping and considering the actual words of our Lord. Some of the aspects with which I shall deal will be: the fundamental conception; some different phases of the one fact, as they are unified in Himself; His view of the existing anarchy; the redemptive processes which He revealed,—the Cross, the Church, the Conflict, the Crisis of the second Advent; and His revelation of final realization.

We commence, then, with the fundamental conception The subject is one of immediate interest. The attention of many is being turned to the Kingdom of God, and much that is of very great value has been written thereon during recent years. In this process of reconsideration and restatement certain things have been said from which personally I should very profoundly differ, while I respect those who have said them. There have been those who have declared that we must return to the teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God, and abandon the apostolic teaching concerning the Church. The idea of the Kingdom and that of the Church have thus been put into opposition to each other. It has been affirmed that the conception of the Church, as we know it, is Pauline, and that Paul in some measure departed from the ideals of Jesus; and we have been urged, in the light of that interpretation, to get back to Christ. Now our present line of study will not

bring us to the consideration of the alleged difference between Paul and Christ; but we shall see where Christ placed the Church in regard to the Kingdom.

That is only a passing illustration. The interesting fact is that at the present hour there is a new interest in the subject; a new enquiry, a new criticism, a new attempt to restate. What is meant by the Kingdom of God? How far are we responsible for it? How far are we realizing it? How far is it possible to realize it? My desire in thus indicating the atmosphere of the moment is to emphasize the immediate interest of our theme.

The fundamental conception will be considered in two ways: first, by observing that the Kingdom of God,—whatever may be meant by the phrase,—was most evidently fundamental to the doing and the teaching of Jesus; and secondly, by attempting to discover the idea that was central to His mind as He used the term.

First, then, the Kingdom was fundamental in the doing and the teaching of our Lord. This hardly needs proof. Whether we consider the teaching that was public, or private, the teaching that was systematic, or incidental; we find running through the whole of it, like flashes of light, this word Kingdom and its cognate phrases. To summarize mathematically and briefly: in the Gospel according to Matthew I find the word Kingdom recorded as passing His lips forty-seven times; in Mark, thirteen; in Luke, thirty-one; and in John, five. In this connection it should be remembered that John used another phrase, which is really the equivalent of Kingdom. His phrase was "eternal life," a phrase emphasizing the power and result of the Divine Kingship, as the other phrases indicate its fact, and deal with its applications.

It is impossible for us to cover all the ground; but there are certain outstanding facts at which we will glance.

These we will group around the words I have already borrowed from the second treatise of Luke, the *doing* and the *teaching* of Jesus. I shall of course deal especially with the teaching, but must also make a brief reference to the fact that His doing was equally based upon this fundamental conception.

The first recorded teaching of Jesus which can be at all described as systematic is found in the Gospel of John. It was given to an individual, Nicodemus. A ruler among his people, he came to Jesus and said, "Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these signs that Thou doest, except God be with Him." To him the Master said, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." When in amazement the ruler replied, "How can a man be born when he is old?" our Lord explicitly replied, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." [1] The first account of our Lord's coming face to face in personal dealing with an inquiring soul records His assumption of the Kingdom of God as the matter of supreme moment. The moment He began to deal with one man who was inquiring for the final light, His recognition of the importance of the Kingdom of God is manifest.

Then observe that when He commenced His more public, definite, and systematic propaganda in Galilee, both Matthew and Mark declare that this was the key-note of His preaching. He "began to preach, and to say, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." [2] His call was to repentance, and the immediate reason was that the Kingdom of heaven was at hand.

Matthew and Mark, in chronicling that key-note to the ministry of our Lord, used different phrases. Matthew reported Him as saying, "The Kingdom of heaven is at

[1] John iii. 2-5. [2] Matt. iv. 17. Mark i. 15.

hand"; [1] while Mark recorded the words thus, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." [2] Thus at the very commencement of our study, we are brought face to face with these two phrases, and to base any particular doctrine upon the difference is entirely unwarranted. The phrase our Lord most commonly used was that of "the Kingdom of heaven," and Mark's change is a revelation of the simple and natural way in which these stories are told. It is certainly true that our Lord did use the phrase, the Kingdom of God. In our study of His teaching we shall make no difference between these two phrases. They are mutually interpretative.

Presently He commissioned and sent forth twelve men; and yet later, seventy. In each commission the principal work allotted to them was in the interest of the Kingdom; "Preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand"; [3] "Say unto them, the Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." [4]

In the parabolic teaching of the Lord, the fact that this conception was fundamental is strikingly revealed. We have twenty-nine parables recorded in the New Testament. Of these, seventeen definitely mention the Kingdom of God, and are declared to be in exposition of it. Those in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew,—the Sower, the Darnel, the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the hidden Treasure, the Pearl, the Drag-net, and the Householder specifically deal with the subject. And beyond those, we have the parables of the unmerciful Servant, the Labourers in the Vineyard, the Two Sons in the Vineyard, the wicked Husbandmen, the royal Marriage Feast, the ten Virgins, the Talents, the Seed growing secretly, and the Pounds;—all of them definitely and explicitly parables concerning the Kingdom of heaven, or the Kingdom of God. If we turn to the other twelve

[1] Matt. iv. 17.
[2] Mark i. 15.
[3] Matt. x. 7.
[4] Luke x. 9.

we find, although the word Kingdom may not occur in them, in more than half of them the context reveals the fact that they are related to the thought of the Kingdom; and in the whole of them the Kingdom conception is the master idea. Whenever He uttered a parable, in His own mind there was the vision of the Kingdom of God.

The same is true of the great systematic discourses of Jesus. In that which we call the Sermon on the Mount, the Manifesto of the King, the ethic is patently that of His Kingdom. Those parables of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, which He delivered partly to the multitudes and partly to His own disciples, are a revelation of the processes of the Kingdom through a certain period. In the great prophecies uttered on Olivet the master thought is still that of the Kingdom. In His last conversation with the disciples in the upper room, before the agony of Gethsemane and Calvary, when He instituted the new ordinance, He said,—it was but an allusion, but it is significant,—"I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God."[1] Thus it is seen that the final realization of all things, towards which He looked under the shadow of the Cross, the light and the glory that lay beyond, was the coming Kingdom of God. When we turn from the Gospels themselves to the last paragraph of history concerning Him ere His ascension, in the first chapter of the Acts, we find that after His resurrection He was seen for many days, during which He was giving His disciples instructions concerning the Kingdom of God.

So that from the first note of systematic teaching, through all methods,—parabolic, systematic, incidental; to the last hour of anticipation, the Kingdom of God was in His mind.

His doing was a further revelation of the fact, which may now be dismissed by three references. When John

[1] Mark xiv. 25.

was cast into prison he was puzzled and perplexed by the method that Jesus was adopting, and he sent his disciples to Him, asking, "Art Thou He that cometh, or look we for another?" Our Lord replied, "Go your way and tell John the things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."[1] As they departed to bear His message He said to the people, "The Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."[2] The connection of His declaration with the message He sent to John must be patent. John looked for the Kingdom, but he could not understand the method of the King. He seemed to be doing nothing. He was gathering no army. He was making no proclamation. He was calling together no parliament of men. He was simply walking about, healing a few, speaking to individuals and companies of men. When the disciples of John came asking Him if He were the King, or were they to look for another, He said in effect, Go and tell John that these things are the things of the Kingdom. I am at work in the interests of the Kingdom. I am manifesting the powers of the Kingdom. I am preparing for the coming of the Kingdom. Then to the multitudes He declared that only men who do violence to their own prejudices will enter that Kingdom. Thus He revealed the fact that all the works of healing and mercy were works of the Kingdom, and works for the Kingdom.

When the Pharisees declared that He cast out demons by the power of Beelzebub, He said, "If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."[3] It was but an incidental reference, yet it revealed the fact that when He cast demons out, He realized

[1] Matt. xi. 3–5. [2] *Ibid.*, xi. 12. [3] *Ibid.*, xii. 28.

hat He was making possible the Kingdom of God in the ase of the individual, and of society.

Again there came a day when the people of Siloam brought their children to Jesus, and the disciples bade them depart. He rebuked the disciples, and He did it angrily. Mark tells us quite definitely that He was moved with indignation. But what was His argument for permitting the children to come? "Of such is the Kingdom of God."[1] So that whether He accounted for His works to a perplexed prophet, or defended His method to the critical and unbelieving Pharisees, or welcomed the children, the reason underlying everything in His own mind was the Kingdom of God.

Thus it is patent that the Kingdom of God was His chief concern, His constant inspiration, His abiding purpose, and His all-sufficient power. Follow Him through all the days of His public ministry, listen to every word that fell from His lips, accompany Him upon every journey that He took, watch every action of beneficence or of judgment; and in the light of the things He Himself said, it becomes apparent that the reason for all speech and all action, for all journeys and all tarryings, for all pity and all anger, was the Kingdom of God. It was the master passion of His life, the fundamental conception of all His teaching and all His doing.

So we may pass to our second enquiry. What was this idea which was so patently central to His mind as He taught and wrought? The terms, Kingdom of heaven, Kingdom of God, were in common use in our Lord's day in the Rabbinical teachings. These terms, or their equivalents, are found in the Old Testament Scriptures. Therefore when our Lord made use of these terms, men were very familiar with them. We are familiar with them because to-day they are peculiarly Christian terms.

[1] Mark x. 14.

The idea of the Kingdom of God, crystallized into a term, emerges in Exodus. Its first appearance in the Old Testament Scriptures is when God said, through Moses, to His ancient people, "Ye shall be unto Me a Kingdom of priests."[1] It appears again in the second book of Samuel, in the story of David's desire to build a temple.[2] We find it again in the books of the Chronicles twice over.[3] The term is found in the books of the Psalms six times.[4] It is mentioned by the prophets Isaiah,[5] Micah,[6] and Obadiah,[7] and it is the very burden of that strange and wonderful book of Daniel. So that the terms our Lord made use of were familiar in Rabbinical teachings, and by reason of the fact that they were incorporated in the Scriptures; but to neither Rabbinical teaching nor Old Testament Scriptures must we go for interpretation of His meaning. The Rabbinical teachings He largely contradicted. He did not contradict the teachings of the Old Testament, but He corrected misinterpretations of them, and He fulfilled them. When therefore we desire to know what our Lord really meant, we have but one court of appeal, His own teachings. The very last story to which I have made reference, the first paragraph in the Acts, reveals the fact that after crucifixion and resurrection His disciples were in entire ignorance of all the deep content of the phrase with which they were so familiar, and it was necessary that He should give them their immediate work, and leave them waiting for fuller explanation after the Pentecostal effusion.

Let us then first take the terms which were so often upon the lips of our Lord, and quite simply look at them; the two terms, the Kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom of

[1] Exod. xix. 6. [2] 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.
[3] 1 Chron. xxix. 11. 2 Chron. xiii. 8.
[4] Psa. xxii. 28; xlv. 6; ciii. 19; cxlv. 11, 12, 13.
[5] Isa. ix. 7; lxii. 3. [6] Micah iv. 8. [7] Obad. 21.

God. While, as we have seen, no clear-cut distinction must be made between them, and while in all probability His own term was most often the Kingdom of heaven, there can be little doubt that He used them both.

The phrase "the Kingdom of heaven" is only to be found in Matthew; but in Matthew we also find the phrases "the Kingdom of God" and "His Kingdom," and that in most remarkable circumstances.

Let us first consider the word Kingdom, which is found in both phrases. Every one is supposed to know what kingdom means. Nevertheless one of the first things necessary to our understanding of the teaching of our Lord is that we should carefully examine this, because our common understanding of the word is partial. In order to an interpretation of the true meaning of the word let us make use of three very simple words: Rule, Realm, Result. Rule is the abstract meaning of Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God. That is the deepest note. Realm is the concrete fact of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is the sphere in which His rule is exercised. Result is the realization of the Kingdom. The Kingdom of God is the result realized within His realm through His rule. The Kingdom of God is the rule of God. The Kingdom of God is the realm over which God rules. The Kingdom of God is the result produced in the realm of God as the result of the rule of God.

All these values are in our word, and we must watch for them. As we study, we must be careful lest when we read of the Kingdom of God we simply think of a territory, and largely neglect the first and fundamental fact that gives value to everything else, that of the rule of God. Modern writers are employing another word, the *reign* of God. Now in certain applications that word is of enormous value, but it leaves a good deal out, and the actual word *Kingdom*

is better; for the reign of God is not the territory over which He rules, but the exercise of authority over it, while the word Kingdom includes both ideas, and more. The Kingdom of heaven is at once the authority of Heaven; the territory over which the heavenly order prevails; and the results produced within that territory because the heavenly order prevails. These are the values of the word, and the truths which we must keep in mind.

Let us now consider the phrase, *of heaven*. A remarkable fact, perhaps a small one apparently, and yet full of significance, is that wherever we read "the Kingdom of heaven" we more accurately express what is actually written if we read, "The Kingdom of the heavens." The word is plural. The value of that may be discovered by a reference to the Lord's Prayer. To read it a little more literally, as to its first half: "Our Father Who art in the heavens, Thy name be hallowed. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth."[1] A doctrine of God is included in the invocation: "Our Father Who art in the heavens." This method of address suggests the omnipresence of God. In the final clause, "as in heaven, so on earth," the word is singular; and the reference patently is to that heaven which is the place of the supreme manifestation of God. Thus the prayer is that the heavenly order may be established in the world.

So that the phrase, Kingdom of heaven, reveals the pattern of the true Kingdom on earth. The idea of the term is that in this world, the laws of heaven should be observed; and by that I do not merely mean the laws heaven makes for earth, but the laws that heaven obeys. How little we know of the heaven that lies beyond, of all that wonderful region, place, locality, where are unfallen angels and the spirits of the just men made perfect. But Christ

[1] Matt. vi. 9, 10

taught us to pray that the laws that govern them, the reason for the things they do, the master-passion of all their activity, may become the laws, the reason, the master-passion governing the affairs of this world of ours.

The phrase, "of God," with a sublime brevity brings us face to face with the central authority, for the Kingdom of the heavens is the Kingdom of God.

We are not at present dealing with applications. We shall come to some of them; for our Lord believed that flowers are in that Kingdom, and that the King clothes them; that birds are in that Kingdom, and that the King is with the dying sparrow; that children are in that Kingdom, and that "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father."

Thus we return in conclusion to the central idea of Jesus when He used these phrases. That idea was that of the rule of God. The rule of God in His mind was at once a fact; a claim in the presence of human will; and a purpose, the master-passion and inspiration of all His own ministry. The clear vision shining through all clouds and darkness, illuminating every hour of His patient, sorrowful life, making even the mists about the Cross purple with the joy that was set before Him, was that of the authority of God, the rule of God, the reign of God. His mission in the world was to proclaim that authority, to insist upon it, to explain it, to reveal it, to woo men towards it, to warn men against neglecting it. The mighty passion that bore Him up through all sorrows and misunderstandings, that bore Him at last to Calvary, was His passion for that Kingdom of God.

We have never yet begun to see the exquisite mosaic of these four stories, nor have we caught the majestic harmony of their varied tones, until we have realized that the Kingdom of God, in the thinking and the purpose of our Lord,

is the key to the mosaic, and the dominant chord of the music. His passion in this world of ours, in this human history which is but a part of God's great whole, was for the restoration of the lost order, the establishment of the Kingdom, and the bringing back of men and things under the beneficent and healing and beauteous sway of the authority of God.

II. DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE ONE FACT

"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*Matthew iv. 17.*

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

"Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven."—*v. 3, 10, 19.*

"Thy Kingdom come."

"But seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—*vi. 10, 33.*

"As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand."—*x. 7.*

"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force."—*xi. 12.*

"But if I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."—*xii. 28.*

"The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and them that do iniquity. . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He that hath ears, let him hear."—*xiii. 41, 43.*

"Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."—*xiii. 52.*

"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—*xvi. 19.*

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven."—*xviii. 3.*

"Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—*xxi. 43.*

"But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the Kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter."—*xxiii. 13.*

. . . . . .

"If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell."—*Mark ix. 47.*

. . . . . .

"Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye shall enter, and they receive you not, go out into the streets thereof and say, Even the dust from your city, that cleaveth to our feet, we do wipe off against you: howbeit know this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh."—*Luke x. 9–11.*

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."—*xii. 32.*

"The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it."—*xvi. 16.*

"Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, There! for lo, the Kingdom of God is within you."—*xvii. 21.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."—*John iii. 3–5.*

"My Kingdom is not of this world: If My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence."—*xviii. 36.*

II

DIFFERENT PHASES OF THE ONE FACT

Let us now consider some phases of the one inclusive fact of the Kingdom of God suggested by the phrases which our Lord used when referring to it. His first recorded reference to the Kingdom was in His conversation with Nicodemus. His last recorded reference to the Kingdom was in His conversation with Pilate. These are at least interesting and suggestive facts. Both these conversations are found in the Gospel according to John: and indeed, they are only found there; and yet further, they are the only occurrences of the word Kingdom in that Gospel.

Between these conversations the word was constantly upon His lips, as the idea was ever in His mind; and so varied were His references and declarations that sometimes they seem to be contradictory. It would not be at all difficult for any one, who was so disposed, to set down one thing our Master said, upon one occasion, concerning the Kingdom; and opposite it something He said upon another occasion, apparently in direct opposition. To take a simple illustration. He declared, "Then shall the righteous *shine forth* as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father."[1] Upon another occasion He said, "The Kingdom of God *cometh not with observation*."[2] I am not proposing now to deal with that apparent contradiction. I but refer to it. As a matter of fact all these seeming contradictions must be considered in their relationship to His whole conception of the Kingdom; and being so considered, they will be found to

[1] Matt. xiii. 43. [2] Luke xvii. 20.

reveal different aspects of the Kingdom as He understood it, and as He came to reveal it.

At the commencement of these studies will be found a table of the references which our Lord made to the Kingdom, set out, so far as I am able, in chronological order.

A glance at this table will show that in the brief report of the words of Jesus preserved for us, there are at least sixty-two references to the Kingdom, and His employment of different phrases with regard thereto is in itself a matter of very great interest. I propose to select those which give distinct ideas, and then to indicate the unification of these ideas in the Person, and in the mission of our Lord.

The boundaries of suggestion are to be found in His first and final references to the Kingdom.

The first reference was made to Nicodemus in the words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."[1] It was a striking introduction, general and inclusive. He made use of a phrase that was current in Rabbinical teaching, and that was not unknown in the Scriptures of the old economy; and immediately connected that common phrase with an idea, strangely new and mystical to the mind of the man who listened. About the "Kingdom of God" Nicodemus knew much, or thought he did; but when the Master declared that no man can see it, unless he be born from above, a new and strange idea was presented to his mind.

Nicodemus had come to Him devoutly, honestly, and sincerely, himself a teacher in Israel, earnestly desiring to know the last thing God had to say to men. He believed that the God of his fathers, Who had spoken to them in divers portions and divers methods in the past, had through Jesus something else to say, something more to communicate: "We know that Thou art a Teacher come from

[1] John iii. 3.

God."[1] He had come to listen to the added line, the new precept, the little more; and our Master took the whole conception of Hebraism, and expressed it in the opening phrase, "the Kingdom of God," and then said to the ruler and the teacher, No man can see it unless he be born anew. The idea of the Kingdom in its entirety lay within that opening word, and it was accompanied by a revelation of our Master's conception of man's condition. A man is unable to see the Kingdom, cannot know it, save as he receives some mystic gift of life from above; the result of the reception of which will be a vision of the Kingdom, and an understanding of its true meaning.

The last declaration was made at the close of the long ministry, in that wonderful word which our Lord spoke in the presence of the Roman procurator, "My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence."[2] This is an equally striking conclusion. If the first word was general and inclusive, the final word was particular and corrective. If the first word indicated the fact that for the seeing of the Kingdom there must be some communication of heavenly life, the last word indicated the fact that for the realization of the Kingdom, material forces and policies are of no avail. The rule of heaven over the world is My Kingdom; My Kingdom is not of the cosmos, does not depend upon the things that are in it. My Kingdom is the reign and rule of heaven over the cosmos. The results at which I have been aiming will never be realized by armies or policies; not hence is My Kingdom.

There stood the Master face to face with the symbol and embodiment in a man, of the greatest power of government in the world; all the Roman Empire was represented in

[1] John iii. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 36.

Pilate, and to him Jesus said, Not hence is My Kingdom; not by these methods is it to be established.

The boundaries of suggestion then are: first, that whatever He meant by the Kingdom, no man can see it, save as he receive new life from above; and finally, that whatever He meant by the Kingdom, it can never be realized in human history, by human policies, and human cleverness. All His teaching is bounded by these two great principles.

Now let us glance over what lies between that first declaration and that final affirmation, and taking all these references attempt to summarize them, and to deduce from them their values. There are five things which our Lord's references to the Kingdom make perfectly clear.

He declared first that the Kingdom of God is that into which men must enter. There is a sense in which all men and all angels and all devils are in the Kingdom of God, and can never escape from His Kingship. But there is a sense in which men are outside, and there must be, on their part, a definite act of entrance.

In the second place His teaching proclaimed the fact that the Kingdom of God came to men, when He came to men.

In the third place His teaching revealed the fact that the Kingdom of God is the inheritance of those who enter in, and submit to the rule of God.

In the fourth place He showed that the Kingdom of God is that for which the subjects, entering in, become responsible in all the affairs of this life.

And finally, He taught that the Kingdom of God is that which will be established in the world by processes leading up to a definite crisis.

That is to summarize quite briefly the result of an examination of the phrases which our Lord used, rather than to consider carefully any particular and specific teaching.

He declared that the Kingdom of God is that into which men must enter. He treated men as being outside that Kingdom; and He was perfectly clear in His teaching concerning the way by which they may enter the Kingdom. He declared that the first necessity for entrance is new life in the second word He spoke to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." [1] He revealed the conditions upon which men may have life, and so enter into the Kingdom; the intellectual condition: "From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence taketh it by force." [2] Or as He said upon another occasion, "The law and the prophets were until John: from that time the Gospel of the Kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." [3] A careful examination of these two in their mutual light will show that our Lord was speaking as to intellectual difficulty, to men who could not understand the methods He was adopting. His methods for the establishment of His Kingdom are as alien to the philosophies of the hour, as they were to the intellectual apprehension of John the Baptist; but He will establish His Kingdom by His own method, which is the only method. Therefore a man must be prepared to do violence to all his own wit and wisdom and cleverness, and be assured that the method of preaching the Gospel to the poor, and healing the sick, and opening blind eyes, and refusing to gather an army, and failing to call together a parliament, are the real methods of the Kingdom;—individual preaching of a truth, insistence upon the importance of truth, the perpetual, quiet, and personal propaganda from man to man, the creation of the new social order by the regeneration of the individuals that make up the social order.

[1] John iii. 5. [2] Matt. xi. 12. [3] Luke xvi. 16.

He also revealed the emotional condition for entering. "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven." [1] Until a man shall go back to childhood, and to the spirit of a little child, which is the spirit of simplicity, of conscious and confessed imperfection, of plasticity; unless a man get back emotionally to that point, and is willing to take that position, he cannot enter into the Kingdom.

He revealed, moreover, in startling language, in terms that thrill and almost thunder in severity, the volitional necessity: "If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out: it is good for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell." [2]

The conception was always that of having to enter in, and the intellectual and the emotional and the volitional values were clearly revealed. The Kingdom is that into which a man must enter, and must enter by a process, by revolution rather than evolution.

But in the second place—and here is the note of hope, and here is the light and the glory of the teaching of Jesus—His words reveal the fact that He conceived of the Kingdom of God as that which had come to men. Such was His unvarying proclamation.

It was the key-note of His own preaching, "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." [3]

It was the key-note of His commission to the twelve, "As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is at hand." [4]

It was the claim He made when His enemies charged Him with casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub,

[1] Matt. xviii. 3.
[2] Mark ix. 47.
[3] Matt. iv. 17.
[4] *Ibid.*, x. 7.

"If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you."[1]

It was the key-note of His commission to the seventy, "Heal the sick . . . and say unto them, The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you . . . howbeit know this, that the Kingdom of God is come nigh."[2]

Finally when enforcing His claim in answer to the criticism of the Pharisees He said, "Lo, the Kingdom of God is among you,"[3] that is, in the midst of you. That is one of the passages upon which philosophies unwarranted by the teaching of Jesus have been built. There are those who tell us that the passage means that our Lord said that in every man there is the Kingdom of God, and it only needs developing. That was not the intention. The context sweeps the idea away. The Kingdom of God was in the midst of them because He was in the midst of them, revealing its purpose, its powers, and its passion. This statement was a claim for Himself, and not a description of human nature. From beginning to end of His ministry He declared that the Kingdom of God was nigh at hand.

Two things then have we so far seen; first that men must enter the Kingdom by way of change, by revolution; and secondly, that He had brought the Kingdom close to men in order that they might enter in.

The third phase of suggestion made by these phrases of our Lord is that the Kingdom of God is the inheritance of the subjects thereof. Three illustrations will suffice; the opening beatitude, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven,"[4] the closing beatitude, "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven,"[5] and when speaking to His own disciples, repeating to them

[1] Matt. xii. 28.
[2] Luke x. 9–11.
[3] *Ibid.*, xvii. 21.
[4] Matt. v. 3.
[5] *Ibid.*, v. 10.

some parts of the Manifesto on another occasion, and in a different place, He gave utterance to these wonderful words, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." [1]

The idea suggested by these words of Christ is that men entering into the Kingdom He has brought nigh become citizens of that Kingdom. There is conferred upon them the freedom of the city of God. They are now made participants in all the values of that Kingdom. They enter, in order to possess it. Those who are poor in spirit, and who therefore enter into the Kingdom He has brought nigh, entering in are not there on sufferance. "No more strangers and sojourners, but . . . fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." [2]

And ultimately to those who enter in, the Kingdom is given in perfection. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." [1] That is a picture of the ultimate democracy, but it is democracy realizing itself under the supreme and vital government of the absolute monarchy of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Those who enter the Kingdom possess it, all its riches are theirs, all its privileges belong to them.

The fourth phase of suggestion resulting from these phrases of our Lord is that the Kingdom of God is that for which its subjects become responsible. Nothing is more patent than this in the study of the words of Jesus. Mark His instructions as they are found in the Manifesto, in the parables, and notably at the great confession at Cæsarea Philippi. In the course of the Manifesto He said as to their teaching: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of heaven." [3] He commanded them to pray for the coming

[1] Luke xii. 32. [2] Eph. ii. 19. [3] Matt. v. 19.

of the Kingdom in the words "Our Father Who art in the heavens, Thy name be hallowed. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."[1] And He called them to effort for the coming of the Kingdom in the words, "Seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[2] Thus those entering the Kingdom He has brought nigh, and sharing its privileges, are made responsible for that Kingdom in the world.

His parabolic teaching, recorded specially in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew, was in part delivered to the multitudes, and in part in private to the disciples. He ended that teaching by asking His own disciples, "Have ye understood all these things?" And they said "Yea." Then said He, "Therefore every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the Kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."[3] Thus the final parable revealed their responsibility. Because they were scribes, instructed to the Kingdom of heaven, they occupied the position of householders, who were responsible to bring out of their treasure-house things new and old.

At Cæsarea Philippi Peter made his great confession, and our Lord indicated this fact of responsibility in one phase of illustration concerning His Church. Not only did He say, "I will build My Church"; not only "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it"; but also, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven."[4] I will give unto thee the insignia of moral authority in the world. The keys are the symbols of an ethical responsibility resting upon all disciples of the Kingdom.

Thus our Lord indicated in His Manifesto, in His para-

[1] Matt. vi. 9, 10.
[2] *Ibid.*, vi. 33.
[3] Matt. xiii. 51, 52.
[4] *Ibid.*, xvi. 18, 19.

bolic teaching, and at the crisis of Peter's confession, the truth that those who enter into the Kingdom which He brings near to men, and who by such entrance do possess for themselves the Kingdom, are responsible in the world for the revelation of that Kingdom, and its proclamation to men.

This is even more solemnly revealed by words He addressed to the rulers of the ancient people, and to the city itself. "I say unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [1] That doom was pronounced because that nation had failed to fulfill its Kingdom responsibility in the world.

The same truth is yet more clearly, vividly, terribly stated in the final woes pronounced upon the rulers, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye shut the Kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter." [2]

All these words addressed to His disciples, and woes pronounced upon the rulers of the time, reveal the same principle, that if we enter the Kingdom which He brings near, and share its privileges, its responsibilities rest upon us.

Finally, the teaching of our Lord revealed the fact that the Kingdom of God on earth is to be established by processes leading to, and culminating in a crisis. All the Kingdom parables teach this. The process is that of the introduction of certain elements through individual souls into the world spirit and the world atmosphere; the introduction of principles; the sowing of the good seed. These parables reveal also the fact of development; the development of opposing forces and principles to full manifestation; the development of the good seed, first the blade, and then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear; the growth

[1] Matt. xxi. 43. [2] Matt. xxiii. 13.

from the seed to the harvest of wheat; the growth to absolute and final development and manifestation of darnel.

There are some people who say: Do you not think the world is getting better? Oh, yes, very much better every day! But others say, Do you not think it is getting very much worse? Yes, very much worse every day! That is exactly the teaching of Jesus; and the man who only sees that it is getting worse does not see as his Master saw; and the man who only sees it getting better, sees very little. Accept it or reject it, this was clearly His teaching. He may have been mistaken, this Teacher of two millenniums ago. For the moment we are dealing only with what He said. The process is one of development; development in which evil is wrought out to its ultimate and most terrible issue and manifestation; development in which good, the good He brought into human history, is wrought out to its final manifestation.

And how will the process end? Not by wheat gaining a victory over darnel, or by darnel driving all wheat out of the field of the world! It will end by a crisis in human history, clear, definite, sharp: a crisis in which evil is to be destroyed and swept out of the world, and good is to be brought to its final realization and its ultimate triumph. Not by a crisis alone, but by a process ending in a crisis! Not by a process alone, but by a crisis prepared for by a process!

The teaching of our Lord and His apostles concerning His second advent as constituting the crisis is perfectly clear, and there can be no greater difficulty in believing that, than in believing the fact of the first advent. The second is no more wonderful a crisis than the first. God's method has always been that of process leading to crisis, the crisis initiating a new movement forward, until the glorious consummation.

Thus our Lord declared that this Kingdom, to which He

made such constant reference, men must enter; He came to bring it near; men entering become citizens thereof; becoming citizens they are responsible for its principles, its revelation, and its operations; and that it will come by processes of development which will go forward until an hour of crisis, when He will appear a second time, definitely taking action; and the Kingdom will be established.

All these phases revealed by His phrases are unified in Himself. In the boundaries of suggestion He first declared that life is the first necessity for vision, and proceeded to show Nicodemus how He had come to give that life. In the final affirmation He declared to Pilate that not by the methods of this world can His Kingdom come, but that He had come to proclaim truth, and that by the victory of truth the Kingdom must come.

Entrance to the Kingdom is made possible by Himself. He it is Who has brought the Kingdom nigh to men. He bestows its gifts, and administers its resources. He directs its responsible services. His own advent is to create the crisis when evil is to be destroyed, and the Kingdom is to be established.

From that rapid survey we see a little more clearly the consequent sequence and order. By the first advent the rule of God was revealed; the realm of the rule was claimed in His name; and the resources were provided that were necessary for the establishment of the material Kingdom upon spiritual foundations.

The process of to-day is that of individual realization of the Kingdom; world-wide proclamation of the Kingdom by those in whom the Kingdom is realized; and corporate realization of all the breadth and beauty of the Kingdom within the Christian Church.

In this last particular we have most conspicuously failed. There is no clear manifestation of the Kingdom of God in

the corporate being of the Church of God to-day. The man outside has no clear vision of the Kingdom of God when he looks at the Christian Church. That one undivided whole, the holy nation, where is it? Blessed be God, the spiritual unity has never been lost, for He has kept that within His own power; but the outward manifestation has been entirely lost. The most disastrous phase of the Church's failure is her failure in her corporate capacity to reveal to men what the Kingdom of God will mean, when it is established in the world.

The last word is that by the second advent there will be accomplished the ultimate victory of good over evil, the subjugation of the whole realm of the earth to the reign of God, in and through Jesus Christ, and so the fulfillment of the great ideal.

It is ours to ask ourselves the simplest of all questions. Have I entered that Kingdom? If I have not entered that Kingdom, how shall I enter it? I can only enter it as He gives me that life from above that enables me to see it, and seeing it to obey it, and obeying it to become its citizen, and becoming its citizen to fulfill my responsibility while I wait for the flaming glory of His advent, and the ultimate triumph of God in the world.

III. THE EXISTING ANARCHY

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. . . . Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. . . . Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."—*Matthew iv. 4, 7, 10.*

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."—*v. 3.*

"When He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd."—*ix. 36.*

"At that season Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in Thy sight. All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father: and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."—*xi. 25–28.*

"Let them alone: they are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit."—*xv. 14.*

"The husbandmen, when they saw the son, said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and take his inheritance."—*xxi. 38.*

"Yea, they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger."—*xxiii. 4.*

. . . . . .

"Leave the dead to bury their own dead; but go thou and publish abroad the Kingdom of God."—*Luke ix. 60.*

"When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace. . . . The unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will turn back unto my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more evil than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man becometh worse than the first."—*xi. 21, 24–26.*

"We will not that this man reign over us."—*xix. 14.*

. . . . . .

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."—*John iii. 3.*

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof."—*viii. 44.*

"Those of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these things, and said unto Him, Are we also blind? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth."—*ix. 40, 41.*

III

THE EXISTING ANARCHY

Our Lord's references to the Kingdom of God reveal it in four ways. First He spoke of it as existing. The fact of the Divine government was ever present to His mind; He always spoke in the evident consciousness of the throne of God, and of the fact that God is Ruler in the universe. He also spoke of the Kingdom of God as come to men in some new and special way, as the result of His own coming; and so indicated the redemptive nature of His mission. He also referred to the Kingdom of God as having to be established by processes, and by that reference revealed the responsibility of the Church in the interest of the Kingdom of God. He finally spoke of the Kingdom as yet to come, and in so doing foretold the consummating activity; and so revealed the way of the ultimate realization of His ideals in human history, and upon this earth.

The implicate of each of the last three of these conceptions is that of existing anarchy. The Kingdom nigh is the Kingdom unrealized. The Kingdom in process is the Kingdom postponed. The Kingdom to come is the Kingdom not come. It is perfectly evident, from all these references of our Lord, that His outlook upon the world was first, fundamentally, and always, that of the whole universe as under the government of God, and that in certain senses it cannot escape therefrom. But His outlook was also clearly that of One Who saw anarchy instead of order; a Kingdom not recognized, not yielded to; unrealized therefore as to its benefits and its glories. To the eyes of our Lord all men were in the grasp of the Divine authority, but not willingly

so. Consequently He saw that their experience of the Divine authority was not according to the first intention of God for men.

Our present theme, then, is that of the existing anarchy as He saw it. While He clearly saw the ultimate, He as clearly saw the immediate; and His references, and His specific teachings, will show us what He saw, and what He thought concerning the anarchy in the midst of which He lived and wrought and taught. We shall attempt to group our examination of this teaching of Jesus concerning the existing anarchy under three headings. First, its manifestations as He described them; secondly, its reasons as He revealed them; and finally its appeal as He was conscious thereof.

First, then, as to the manifestations of anarchy in the midst of which our Lord lived. I will first summarize, and then refer to some of His sayings, which will help us in this matter. It is evident that our Lord, looking out upon men, saw that they were actuated by false ideals concerning the Kingdom of God. As has been seen in an earlier meditation, the phrase was no new phrase. They were quite familiar with it in the Rabbinical teachings of that time, and it was also incorporated in the Scriptures of the Old Covenant. He was in the midst of men who had some idea of the Kingdom of God; or even though they had no idea of that Kingdom, they had ideas concerning kingdoms and governments and authorities; and the teachings of Jesus clearly reveal that these were false ideas. His teaching also reveals men as living under false rule. Finally, He saw men not merely holding false ideals, and living under false rule, but characterized by persistent perversity, in spite of the light He came to bring.

As to the false ideals. The first revelation of His teaching in the matter is to be discovered in the account of His temptation, especially in the form in which that account is

given to us in the Gospel according to Matthew. Not that here we have specific teaching, but that in the account of our Lord's own temptation, and in the process of that temptation, as we watch Him and listen to Him, we have a revelation of what He thought concerning human ideals as He found them in the world. It is necessary that we should first be reminded of the place of the temptation, and its relation to this whole subject of the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel according to Matthew is preëminently the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. The key-note of the ministry of John as it is recorded in that Gospel was, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."[1] He foretold the coming of the King; One "mightier than I"[2] said he, is coming after me, whose shoe latchets I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. He also described the ministry of the coming King as that of One Who would come with the fan and the fire to destroy the things of evil, and to realize the things of goodness.

Following this story of the ministry of the Baptist we have the account of the first appearance of the King. He came to John, submitted to his baptism, and was immediately attested of heaven, and anointed by the Spirit for His mission in the world. The first event following that anointing was that of His temptation. Thus it is seen that the temptation had its relation, not merely to the personal life of Jesus, but also to His mission in the interest of the Kingdom of God. That becomes patent when we consider the ultimate goal of the adversary's attack. Luke, telling the story, places the temptations in another order, for which he had a special reason. Personally I have no doubt that Matthew gives us the actual order. That goal is reached in the third temptation, in which he showed to the anointed King all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, and said: These will I give Thee for one moment's homage rendered to me.

[1] Matt. iii. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, iii. 11.

Beginning with the Man upon the physical side of His being, he offered Him bread as the sole necessary sustenance of life; proceeding to the spiritual essential, he suggested that He should traffic with His relationship and tempt God; until reaching the ultimate purpose of the being of the Man, His vocation, he suggested that He should obtain the end, reach the goal, possess the Kingdoms, by the method of yielding a moment's homage to himself.

Now, in that movement we have the Master's conception of the false ideals of evil, concerning a world kingdom, revealed. The first temptation was an appeal to the material, and the answer of Jesus was: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."[1] The second temptation was to the spiritual, and to spiritual selfishness, and the answer of Jesus was: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."[2] The final temptation was directed against the vocational position of Jesus, and suggested the gathering of the kingdoms of the world into one by political intrigue; and the answer of Jesus was, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."[3]

In contrast to these affirmations of Christ, which constituted the bed-rock of His own strength, and the very fortress of His victory, we find His conception of the false ideals concerning the Kingdom which men entertained. The first revelation is that of the materialistic ideal which declares that all man needs is bread; which makes bread a basis for a kingdom. Men were acting as though a kingdom depended upon things material alone. Of course this is the reduction of the philosophy to its simplest formula. Nearer the end of His ministry there came a day when multitudes would fain have made Him King, because He had fed them; and He declined to be crowned King upon that basis.

[1] Matt. iv. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, iv. 7. [3] *Ibid.*, iv. 10.

Secondly, the false ideal of selfishness is exposed; the ideal that within the Kingdom, if you recognize spiritual things, they are to be recognized in order to the enrichment and the comfort of those who receive them. That was the central thought.

Finally the ideal of political intrigue, the suggestion that by diplomatic arrangement and compromise kingdoms may be federated into a kingdom.

Turning from that very brief glance at the temptation, to the Manifesto of the King uttered in Galilee, we recognize how entirely opposed it is to the conceptions which men held at that time; and indeed, how entirely opposed it is to the conceptions which men still have, as to what a world kingdom ought to be. From that Manifesto I take three very familiar sayings. First the key-note, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." [1] When dealing with law He declared that law is spiritual, and that there is no morality which is final and sufficient, other than the morality inspired by religion. Concerning anxiety He bade His subjects not to be anxious what they shall eat, or what they shall drink, or how they shall be clothed; but to be anxious about the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

To examine these ideals is at once to discover how false are the ideals of men. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." [1] Do men even yet believe that the Kingdom of God is to be possessed and established by poverty of spirit in the sense in which our Lord used the word? Morality must be spiritual. There is no challenge to immorality other than religion. Men endeavour to challenge immorality by all sorts of traditions, rules, and regulations; and to check vulgarities by legislation. Men are overwhelmingly anxious about the things of to-morrow, and about the material necessities of to-day.

[1] Matt. v. 3

As Jesus looked out upon His age He saw these false ideals mastering men, holding them in their grasp, conditioning their attitudes and their activities. The persistent opposition to His teaching from the commencement of His public ministry until the tragedy of Calvary, is a revelation of the accuracy of His measurement of these ideals. Why did they crucify our Lord? Asking the question,—not as within that determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, to which we shall have to make reference again ere we have done with the subject of the Kingdom;—but purely as within the experiences and the doings of the hour in which He lived, we have to reply, simply because they would not accept His ideals. He was a Teacher contradicting all the conceptions upon which they were basing conduct; saying to them, Repent, change your mind; your deeds are wrong because your outlook is wrong, and your conceptions are wrong. They would not hear and obey; and the only alternative from their standpoint was that of silencing His voice, and putting Him away.

He revealed in His teaching, not only that men were actuated by false ideals, but that they were living under a false rule. It is never to be lost sight of that every stern word of Jesus, and all His rebukes were reserved for the rulers; and all the way through His ministry we discover, not their opposition alone, but also His criticism of their position. He was perpetually, in direct word and in parable, unmasking them, attempting to show the men of His age wherein the rulers failed; and how they were all under false rule, the rulers themselves being under the rule of their own false ideals.

In one of His final parables uttered to the rulers He revealed the principle of all false authority as He said, "Let us . . . take His inheritance."[1] So said the rulers

[1] Matt. xxi. 38.

according to Jesus; and the false principle of all false authority was that of self-centred consideration. In this view the Lord's teaching harmonized perfectly with the prophetic denunciations in the Old Testament Scriptures. "Woe unto the shepherds of Israel!"[1] Why? Because when they should feed the sheep, they are feeding themselves. When they should shepherd and guard the sheep, they are seeking to be guarded themselves. It was Homer who said all kings are shepherds of the people. One wonders sometimes if it would not have been more true to human history if Homer had said all kings ought to be shepherds of the people. But men seek positions of authority, not in the interests of the governed, but in their own interest.

Consequently the method was a false method. Yet a little later in His ministry, in that final hour of conflict with the rulers, He exposed these methods when He said, "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with their finger."[2] I go back to Isaiah for illustration of the difference between the rule of God and the false reign of idols. A man takes and cuts down a tree, and uses part for purposes of his own need, and with the residue he maketh him an idol; and then he carries his idol. Jehovah God carries men who serve Him. That is the difference. They, the false rulers, bind burdens on others. The God Who is the one Ruler bids men roll their burden on Him.

So that our Lord revealed the fact that according to His conception, when lawmakers make laws that are burdens that men have to carry, it is entirely contrary to the first principles of law within the Kingdom of God. And to go back to an earlier passage in Matthew, according to the

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 2. [2] Matt. xxiii. 4.

teaching of Jesus, what was the issue of this false rule, whose principle was selfishness, whose method was that of binding burdens? When He beheld the multitude as sheep without a shepherd He saw those multitudes "distressed . . . scattered";[1] fainting, harried by wolves, fleeced and homeless, none to care for them, or to bind their wounds. The issue of false rule is the distress and the scattering of the people. Only remember that while the picture as our Lord saw it must ever appeal to our compassion also, yet no one else saw the people in that condition. The people then were as satisfied as are the people of London to-day. The people were just as sure they were doing well, as are the people in our own times, who are independent of the Kingdom of God. It was only the King, Who saw the Kingdom of God as it ought to be, Who also understood the real ruin and degradation of men.

The final manifestation of anarchy to which our Lord referred was not merely that men had false ideals, and that they were living under a false rule, and exercising a false rule, but that they were perverse. In the parable of the pounds we discover our Lord's central conception of existing anarchy. The reason of the parable is given in the words, "As they heard these things, He added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the Kingdom of God was immediately to appear."[2] At the heart of the parable we find these words: "His citizens hated him, and sent an embassage after him, saying, We will not that this man reign over us."[3] His disciples and others thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear. He said to them in effect: The Kingdom of God cannot appear. Behold the anarchy. Look at the condition of affairs. The citizens of the Kingdom will not have the King; they will reject the

[1] Matt. ix. 36. [2] Luke xix. 11–22. [3] *Ibid.*, xix. 14.

King; they will cast the King out. That was His outlook upon the supreme difficulty, that of the perversity of the human heart, having its own false ideal, exercising and submitting to its own false rule, and perverse.

Until this hour that is the difficulty. It is the final difficulty. False ideals are still governing men. False rule is still being exercised and submitted to. Ideals entirely at variance with the ideals of the Kingdom of God as our Lord revealed them; a rule entirely out of harmony with the rule of God as made clear to us in the person of our Lord. But the supreme difficulty is that men are perverse; that they are still saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. We shall never be able to establish the Kingdom of God until that perversity is dealt with. Until that perversity in some way is overcome; until the will of man is turned into harmony with the will of God; we shall never establish the Kingdom of God in the world.

Now rapidly let me gather up His teaching concerning the reasons of this anarchy. We may summarize them thus:—Blindness; spiritual slavery; and spiritual death.

Blindness. His very first reference to the Kingdom is recorded in these words, "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."[1] He explicitly declared the fact of this blindness to the disciples, when upon one occasion referring to the rulers He said, "They are blind guides. And if the blind guide the blind, both shall fall into a pit."[2] And again in holy satire, when in conflict with the Pharisees, He said to them, "If ye were blind, ye would have no sin: but now ye say, We see: your sin remaineth";[3] a revelation of the fact that whereas there was blindness, it had become willful blindness in the presence of the light that He had brought to men on the subject of the Kingdom of God. Men do not see the

[1] John iii. 3. [2] Matt. xv. 14. [3] John ix. 40, 41.

Kingdom of God, and blind guides are leading blind people, with the result that all fall into the pit. And wherever the light of His revelation has come, men are willfully blind; not all, of course, for there were those around the Lord who were walking in the light, and were obedient thereto, and had healing, and their sight came.

But the revelation that our Lord in His teaching made of the reason of the anarchy goes deeper still. He declared, in symbol and parable and by explicit word, that men are in spiritual slavery. In answer to the charge of complicity with Beelzebub which they made against Him, He said, "When the strong man fully armed guardeth his own court, his goods are in peace."[1] That was His picture of the times. The strong man fully armed was Satan; guarding his own court, his goods were in peace. But when a stronger than he comes, he dispossesses the strong man. That was our Lord's claim for Himself, that He was stronger than Satan. He looked at the Pharisees, the rulers, and the people, and He said, Here is the reason of your blindness. You are under the dominion of Satan; a strong man armed holds you fast and safely; and there is no breaking away from that bondage unless a stronger than he come to deliver you.

In continuation of that parable He spoke another, that weird parable of the empty house, the house from which the evil spirit had been dislodged, but which finding no new tenant, the evil spirit returned with seven other spirits, and whose last state was worse than the first.[2] That gives us our Lord's view of men as under the mastery of evil spirits. At last He said to the men who were opposing Him, in terms so explicit as to be full of terror until this time, "Ye are of your father the devil," "a murderer from the beginning," "a liar and the father thereof";[3] therefore you murder and you lie.

[1] Luke xi. 21. [2] *Ibid.*, xi. 24–26. [3] John viii. 44.

Jesus looked out, and He saw false ideals, false rule, perversity, and why? Because men were blind, and could not see. And why? Because they were mastered by evil, by evil spirits, by spiritual antagonisms. That teaching was revolutionary in His day, and it is still; and it is because we have lost sight of it, that we do not understand how to deal with the problems that confront the Christian Church.

Finally our Lord taught that men are blind and in spiritual slavery. They are spiritually dead. One word is enough, that startling word of Jesus, so easily read, but so searching, how when a man said to Him under a holy impulse, "Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father," He replied, "Leave the dead to bury their own dead."[1] That father was not physically dead. That was not a request to remain to a funeral. It was a request to remain for years, perhaps, to take care of his father. Christ's outlook upon men is that they are spiritually dead, because severed from the life and from the virtue that come from fellowship with God; in anarchy, because under a spiritual domination which is evil.

And so finally what appeal did anarchy make to Him? He saw it clearly, and He had come to establish the Kingdom of God. In order to do that, what were the things needed in view of the anarchy? First that there should be a clear revelation of true authority. All we have said as to blindness reveals this. Read once more in the eleventh chapter of Matthew the paragraph on John in prison; and immediately following it, on the unreasonableness of the generation; and immediately following it, on the unrepentant cities. It moves on until Christ said, "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes: yea, Father, for so it was

[1] Luke ix. 59, 60.

well-pleasing in Thy sight." And then turning from address to heaven, He faced the multitude in their blindness, and He said, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden."[1] In that general survey we discover that Christ claimed to be able to reveal to men the true authority, in order that they might be led back to submission thereto.

But that was not enough. Not merely does anarchy ask for the revelation of the true authority; it asks for power to dispossess, and to repossess. It asks for the Stronger than the strong man armed, in order that the strong man armed may be despoiled. It asks for a tenant to indwell the house; for it is not enough to cast the evil spirit out, and leave the house swept and garnished. There must be an Indweller, Who shall hold and possess it; or else seven other evil spirits may enter in, and make the last case worse than the first. Anarchy is asking for some One mighty enough to master the strong man armed, and dwell in the house, and hold it as against his power.

Consequently anarchy demands spiritual renewal. Men cannot see the Kingdom. Then they must have life, be born from above, in which life shall come new vision. They cannot enter it. Then they need new life, in order that in the power of that life they may enter in, and abide.

The Lord saw the rule of God, and the realm over which that rule might be exercised, and the glorious results that would follow therein; but He also saw the rule disobeyed, because another rule was obeyed; He saw the realm desolate over which God should reign; and consequently all the gracious results absent in human life individually, socially, nationally, and racially. Therefore He

[1] Matt. xi. 25–28.

knew that in order to establish the rule, the anarchy must be dealt with, not superficially, but radically.

How far is all this true to-day? How far is it true to-day that there is an existing anarchy, whose manifestations are false ideals, false rule, perversity, whose reasons are human blindness, the dominion of evil spiritual forces, and consequently spiritual death? In the measure in which these things abide, they are still making their appeal to the King, asking for authority, asking for a power that operates towards the Kingdom of God, and asking for life that men may see and enter in.

IV. THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES—THE CROSS

"Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God."—*Matthew xvi. 16.*

"I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—*xvi. 19.*

"From that time began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up."—*xvi. 21.*

"Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."—*xvi. 28.*

"And behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him. And Peter answered, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah. While he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold, a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."—*xvii. 3–5.*

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."—*xviii. 3, 4.*

. . . . . .

"Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father."—*John x. 17, 18.*

"Sir, we would see Jesus. . . . The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. . . . Father, glorify Thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. . . . Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."—*xii. 21, 23, 28, 31, 32.*

"My Kingdom is not of this world: if My Kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My Kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a King then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."—*xviii. 36, 37.*

IV

THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES—THE CROSS

We now proceed to consider the teaching of our Lord concerning the redemptive processes for the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The contrast between the fundamental conception of Jesus as to the Kingdom of God, and His view of the existing anarchy is complete. On the one hand He saw clearly what the rule of God over the realm of the whole earth and all men would be; and how glorious the results, harmonizing with His nature of holiness and love. But on the other hand He saw that rule of God unknown or disregarded, and the realm consequently in chaos; with results of abounding pollution, and all that was contrary to love. He claimed, as we have seen, that in His coming the Kingdom was brought to men. His mission then most evidently was that of dealing with the anarchy, in order to restore the Kingdom.

We turn now to consider His own teaching as to the processes by which this is to be accomplished. Let it be immediately recognized that in all His teaching there is no trace of a tremor or a doubt. He never spoke speculatively as to the ultimate issue. He moved quietly and calmly forward, both in word and deed, towards a consummation of which He Himself had no doubt. Keenly conscious of the anarchy, protesting against it, thundering against it, weeping over it; He nevertheless walked ever in the light of the glory that is to be; the calm assurance filling His heart from the beginning of His ministry to the end, that at last, though a wide compass first be fetched, the Kingdom of God must be established.

In His teaching we have very clear evidences of His own conceptions as to how that consummation is to be reached. That teaching may thus be summarized. He declared that the Kingdom can only be established by the way of the Cross. He declared that the instrument through which He would move towards the establishment of the Kingdom would be His Church. He declared that throughout the processes there would be a persistence of very definite and severe conflict. He declared that these processes would be completed by the crisis of His advent, in order to the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom.

Our present subject is that of His teaching concerning the way of the Cross. The facts concerning our Lord's teaching on this matter are: first, that after the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi He explicitly declared the necessity for the Cross; secondly, that this necessity was constantly reaffirmed during the days following that first declaration; and thirdly, that in all His subsequent special teaching of His disciples, the principle of the Cross was evidently in His mind, and illustrated in many ways.

Let us take first, the explicit statements; and secondly, some of the instances of illustration.

First, then, as to the explicit statements of our Lord concerning the Cross. With the details we are not now concerned. They are perfectly plain and unmistakable. Our business is that of observing the relation of these statements to His Kingdom ideals and purposes. For this purpose we may confine our attention to the first occasion, that of Cæsarea Philippi, for all subsequent explicit declarations were exactly of the same nature.

Let us, then, first carefully observe the facts of relationship between the Cross and the Kingdom as they are revealed in this teaching; proceeding in the second place to consider the reason of that relationship.

First, then, as to the facts. The whole pronouncement at Cæsarea Philippi must always be borne in mind when any part of it is under consideration. To take some one declaration, and not to consider it in the light of the whole, may be to misinterpret it entirely. This was the hour of the great confession, the hour in which in answer to the challenge of the Master, Peter, spokesman of the rest of the disciples, said to Him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."[1] That was the confession of a Hebrew, that Jesus Christ was the Messiah; the One for Whom his people had been waiting for centuries and millenniums. It was a confession that at last the King had appeared, Who had been foretold by prophets, seers, and psalmists in bygone days. At last He had come, the King; and He had come for the establishment of the Kingdom. That was certainly the meaning of the confession from the standpoint of the Hebrew. "Thou art the Messiah," not Elijah, not Jeremiah, not John the Baptist, not one of the prophets; but *the* One for Whose coming all had looked, and the purpose of Whose coming all had in greater or less degree indicated, in the course of their prophetic ministry. Thou art the King. Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God.

Now observe what Christ said in answer to that confession. He declared four things in close connection: first, the secret of the Church; secondly, the necessity for the Cross; thirdly, the inevitability of a conflict; and finally, the certainty of the crisis of His own second advent. The first matter to be noted is that of the unity of these things in the declaration of Jesus.

Confining ourselves to the subject particularly before us, we notice in the course of this teaching two definite references to the Kingdom; first when He said to Peter concerning the Church, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven"; [2] and again, when at the close of the

[1] Matt. xvi. 16. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 19.

discourse He uttered the words: "Verily I say unto you, There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." [1] The whole thought of Jesus was moving within the realm of the Kingdom of God. The Cross is not something as apart from the Kingdom. It was most evidently and intimately associated in the mind of our Lord with the Kingdom purpose.

He declared that in order to the establishment of that Kingdom He must go to the Cross. The *must* that declared the necessity for the Cross declared the necessity for the Cross in the interest of the Kingdom. The joy that was set before Him was that of the Kingdom established, the establishment of the rule of God over the realm of the whole earth, with the gracious results of holiness and love, and the consequent blessedness of humanity; and He distinctly said that in order to reach that goal, He must go by the way of the Cross.

Reverently then, let us press a little closer to these assertions, and inquire the reason. How far does this particular passage and these repeated explicit declarations throw light upon this subject? The King said that He must go by the way of the Cross, thus affirming the necessity for it. Does He give us in any measure to see the reason for that necessity? The answer is self-evident. The reason why He must go by the way of the Cross is first of all to be discovered in the anarchy in the midst of which He lived. It is secondly to be discovered in the authority under which He was acting in His mission in the world. And finally it is explained by His activity under that authority in the midst of that anarchy.

The anarchy is focussed, and focussed in a way that I think we are apt to see but dimly, in this first explicit declaration of our Lord. He said the Son of Man "must go

[1] Matt. xvi. 28.

to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the *elders and chief priests, and scribes.*"[1] These were all distinctly named by our Lord at that point, because in the naming of them He covered the whole ground of the forces that were antagonistic to Him and to the Kingdom of God. The Sanhedrim was composed of these different orders, all exercising authority; the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes. First we have what to-day we should speak of as the lay authority, or the civic authority, that of the elders. The authority of the Jewish State, as it existed at that moment in Jerusalem, was vested in them. Then we have the religious authority of the hour as it was vested in the chief priests. And finally we have the ethical authority of the hour as it was vested in the order of the scribes. Now the Lord distinctly declared that all these phases of authority that gathered within the Sanhedrim would be against Him, and that at their hands He must suffer. The lay authority of the elders, the religious authority of the chief priests, the ethical authority of the scribes; all were against Him. All authority was degraded, all authority was false, and all authority was antagonistic. He being the Representative of the Divine authority, the King Himself appointed of God over the Kingdom of God, faced the opposition to that Kingdom as it was focussed in those who were themselves in authority. The causes of their opposition we need not now deal with. We have already done so when speaking of the existing anarchy. The results of the reign of these men, of their rule and their authority, were manifested in the condition of the people, over which Christ mourned. They were as sheep, scattered, fleeced, harried, having no shepherd. Into that atmosphere, which was the atmosphere of anarchy, of antagonism to the reign of God, He went. It was in view of these things that He declared He must go to the Cross.

[1] Matt. xvi. 21.

But we are immediately conscious of the fact that this has not brought us to the deepest note as to the necessity for the Cross. Why not leave these anarchists to work out their own anarchy to its end, which must inevitably be destruction? Why the *must* of Jesus? We give the central answer when we declare that the necessity for the Cross was not the anarchy alone, but the authority under which He was moving. That is clearly revealed in His own words, not recorded by Matthew, but by John. "Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father." [1] By that declaration of the Lord Himself we learn that the necessity for the Cross was created by the nature of God, which is love; and that the compulsion of His determination to establish His reign of love was the central factor in the *must* of Jesus. It may be said, and with a partial accuracy, that the reason for the Cross was the necessity for the establishment of righteousness; that the profoundest reason for the Cross is to be discovered in the holiness of God. But might not the principle of righteousness have been satisfied, if we take the principle of righteousness alone, by the sweeping out of the things that offended, by the destruction and annihilation of all evil men and things? I affirm that this principle might have been satisfied in that way. But when behind righteousness, inspiring it, is love, then the necessity is created for dealing with anarchy, and with the men steeped therein, in such a way as to save the men. "This commandment received I from My Father." The King moved towards the focussed manifestation and expression of anarchy in the opposition of elders, chief priests, and scribes;

[1] John x. 17, 18.

and He moved towards it, because it must be dealt with in such a way as to save the men; and it must be dealt with in that way because God is love. His determination was to establish anew the kingdom of love and light and life where anarchy reigned, and amongst men who were suffering as the result of sin.

We have the explanation of the necessity most perfectly revealed in the actual activity, wherein, again to refer to the word in John, He laid down His life. In the hour of that Cross He experienced the ultimate of anarchy. Sin expressed itself completely and finally when it flung itself against Him. In the Cross I see the unmasking and unveiling of sin as it came to its most appalling and final expression in human history. There is no other problem of evil so terrific as the Cross. In the annals of history there was never any such naked, awful manifestation of evil as the action that put Him on the Cross; and to that bursting of the storm of evil He bared His own bosom; He gathered all into His own Person. That is the holy of holies! That is the central and constant mystery! I cannot apprehend all that transaction, because I cannot apprehend the Person who accomplished it.

If I had no more than His declaration of intention, and the fact of the Cross; if I had seen Him move thus heroically to face the anarchy, to gather its ultimate issue into His own heart, and nothing more; His heroism would be to me finer and more wonderful than the mind of man had ever dreamed; but neither for myself, nor for the world should I have either light, or hope, or expectation of ultimate results. The Cross would be a forlorn hope, the heroism of an uttermost despair, the splendid dream of a misguided enthusiast, and nothing more. But when, according to His own constantly repeated affirmation that He would rise again, I see Him rise again; then I discover that

in the mystery of that Cross, He was not only the Sin-bearer; in the activities of that dark hour, He was the Sin-destroyer; in some infinite transaction beyond human power of thought, He destroyed the works of the devil. That is proved by the fact that He emerged from the dark hour triumphant in the glory of His resurrection. So, by these activities, I have an interpretation of the meaning of His declaration as to the necessity for the Cross. In order to establish the Kingdom He must Himself gather the sin to Himself, and deal with it, grapple with it, master it, negative it; and, emerging from the struggle victorious, communicate life, in the power of which other souls shall be able to enter into the same struggle, and with a like result. Thus in order to establish the Kingdom of God in an individual, He dealt with that which had destroyed the Kingdom of God; and created for men a new liberty of action, both spiritual and moral. He must go to the Cross in order to reach the Kingdom, because His Kingdom can never be finally established merely by the exercise of an iron rule that holds evil things in suppression. His Kingdom must be finally established, a Kingdom having within it no element that destroys, having within it no possibility of a new outbreak of anarchy, or final destruction of the high purposes of God. Therefore He moved to that infinite mystery focussed in the dark hour on the green hill; and there He took hold of the forces that had spoiled, and spoiled them; of the forces that had destroyed, to destroy them; of the evil things that had wrought the ruin, in order to ruin them; and thus provided the remedy for the individual soul, and ultimately for the race.

From this all too rapid examination of the explicit statement and teaching, let us pass to glance at some instances of His illustration of the principle in His subsequent teaching. To make selections here is very difficult. We shall simply glance on a little way in this same Gospel of Matthew.

What immediately followed? The holy mount. Each evangelist giving the record of Cæsarea Philippi gives also the record of the holy mount, and links the two events by the selfsame declaration: "There be some of them that stand here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom."[1] There were far wider values in that declaration than I now suggest, but in that holy mount He gave some of them to see in picture something of the ultimate Kingdom. Let us then observe it, noticing only two things: the vision they beheld, and the voice to which they listened. What was the vision of the holy mount? The central fact is, that the supreme interest of their glorified Lord was manifested in the subject of His converse with Moses and Elijah. Behold Him in His glory, His face as the sun shining in its strength, His very garments white and glistering! Oh, the rapture of that hour when the three disciples looked upon Him in all the glory of His perfected humanity. In such an hour, of what did He think, of what did He speak? "There appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him"; [2] and Luke tells us that they talked of the exodus which He was about to accomplish in Jerusalem. He talked with them of the very subject of which He had spoken to these men for the first time at Cæsarea Philippi. He talked with them not of the death He was about to die merely. The subject was far more majestic and wonderful than that; He talked of the exodus He was about to accomplish. He must go and suffer and be killed and be raised. He was going to accomplish, not to be defeated! He was not moving to Jerusalem as a Victim, but as a Victor. There, on the holy mount, the disciples heard Him talking about that victory!

Was there not at least a remarkable suggestiveness in the visitors whom they saw on the holy mount? Moses, the

[1] Matt. xvi. 28. [2] *Ibid.*, xvii. 3.

founder of the Theocracy. Elijah, who came into the midst of the period of the degenerate kingdom, and thundered against its degeneracy. The founder and the reformer talked with the King upon the holy mount of all He was about to do, which they had failed to do, and the way of accomplishment was realized to be that of the Cross.

Then there came the voice to the disciples. When Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, I will make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah," the voice replied, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him."[1] It was a rebuking voice. It took them back to Cæsarea Philippi. There had been six days of silence; six days with no record of anything said between the Lord and these men. They had been afraid of the voice that had told of the Cross. They had now heard Christ speaking with Moses and Elijah of that Cross; and the heavenly voice said, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." We have three records of that voice breaking the silence in the life of Jesus: once at the baptism in Jordan; once here; and once later, when the Greeks desired to see Him. Such Divine attestation always came when the Master was approaching the Cross in the interests of the Kingdom. When anointed as King He had consented to be numbered with the transgressors in baptism, as the symbol of His coming passion baptism; on the holy mount when in the glory of His own perfected humanity He talked with Moses and Elijah of the Cross as the way to the Kingdom; and later when the Greeks came and said, "Sir, we would see Jesus," and Jesus said, "The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. . . . Father, glorify Thy name," then said the voice, "I have both glorified it and will glorify it again," and the Lord immediately declared, "Now is the judgment of this

[1] Matt. xvii. 4–5.

world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Myself."[1] All these illustrations reveal the fact that in His thinking and by His teaching, He was moving perpetually towards His Kingdom by the way of His Cross.

Pass on through Matthew, and every page gleams with the same revelation. Was He talking to His own disciples about the way of entrance to His Kingdom, and greatness therein? Then He told them that they must turn back and be as little children.[2] That is the way of the Cross. And if a man question this, let him practice the teaching, and he will discover that for a man to turn back to childhood is indeed the way of the Cross. Did He talk to them about the way in which to end disorder as within the Kingdom? Then He took the parable of the man who was forgiven a debt, and being forgiven, went out to exact the utmost penalty from his brother; and so was rearrested, and his own indebtedness was claimed.[3] This is one of the most singularly fine illustrations of what the Cross is. When a man forgives debt what does he do? He bears the loss resulting from another's wrong-doing. It is his personal loss, and he suffers it, in order to forgive. If God so forgive, by suffering loss on our behalf, He does it in order that we also may forgive, by suffering loss; and if we will not so forgive, then He will rearrest us, and claim the utmost penalty.

Or if presently He would speak to His disciples in answer to their request for power as He was on the way to Jerusalem, then He said, "Are ye able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" And they said unto Him, "We are able." To which He replied that they should, and He admitted them to the place of spiritual authority and power; but He indicated that the way thereinto was the way of the Cross.[4]

[1] John xii. 21, 23, 28, 31, 32.
[2] Matt. xviii. 3–4.
[3] *Ibid.*, xviii. 23–35.
[4] *Ibid.*, xx. 17–28.

These are but instances. The principle runs through to the last conversation with Pilate. When Pilate said, "Art Thou a king then?" He had said, "My Kingdom is not of this world . . . not from hence."[1] The fact that the Cross was necessary for the establishment of the Kingdom of truth is focussed in that conversation with Pilate.

The teaching of Jesus is perfectly clear. It declares the indispensability of the Cross in His own mission and in the process, to the crisis and the consummation. And why? Because by that principle of the Cross—which had its supreme manifestation and activity in His own Person;—by that, and by that alone, sin is exhausted, negatived, destroyed; and by that principle, and that alone, through the victory over sin, righteousness is made possible. God's Kingdom must be so built that naught that defileth remains within.

Is not the testimony of experience in harmony with this revealed teaching of Jesus? Is the Kingdom of God ever set up in a human life except by the way of the Cross? By the way of His Cross trusted in, and by our identification with that Cross in principle, whereby we die to the self-life, which is of the essence of anarchy, and rebellion; we find our way back again into His Kingdom. And as that is the way in individual experience, it is also the true method for the ultimate establishment of His Kingdom. Always by the mystery of an apparent defeat will God's victories be won. Always by identification with such death as He died will life be liberated and become powerful. The Kingdom of God will only be established by the way of the Cross.

[1] John xviii. 36–37.

V. THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES— THE CHURCH

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—*Matthew xvi. 16–19.*

"Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?"—*xviii. 1.*

"And if thy brother sin against thee, go, show him his fault between thee and him alone: if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses or three every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them, tell it unto the Church: and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican. Verily I say unto you, What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."—*xviii. 15–20.*

"Therefore is the Kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would make a reckoning with his servants."—*xviii. 23.*

"When the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation concerning the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister; and whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—*xx. 24–28.*

"Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do what is done to the fig tree, but even if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou taken up and cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."—*xxi. 21, 22.*

"Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."—*xxi. 43.*

"But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father on the earth: for One is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even the Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and whosoever shall humble himself shall be exalted."—*xxiii. 8–12.*

"I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom."—*xxvi. 29.*

. . . . . .

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth: for He shall not speak from Himself; but what things soever He shall hear, these shall He speak: and He shall declare unto you the things that are to come."—*John xvi. 12, 13.*

. . . . . .

"They therefore, when they were come together, asked Him, saying, Lord, dost Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And He said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—*Acts i. 6-8.*

V

THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES— THE CHURCH

In order of time Christ mentioned His Church before His Cross. In order of history the Cross necessarily preceded the Church.

Having considered His teaching as to the relation of the Cross to the Kingdom, we turn now to that which reveals the relation of the Church to the Kingdom.

There has been a tendency in some modern teaching to place the idea of the Church and that of the Kingdom in opposition to each other. But they are intimately related, and so far as the teaching of our Lord Himself is concerned, during the days of His flesh, His references to the Church were entirely in the realm of His teaching concerning the Kingdom. He only referred to the Church as an instrument towards the establishment of the Kingdom in the world.

Paul's teaching concerning the Church does not contradict that of our Lord. It goes very far beyond it. To Paul was committed what he himself described as the stewardship of the mystery of the Church, and through him the Spirit revealed eternal aspects of the Church's vocation at which our Lord Himself never hinted. These were among the things which the disciples of Christ could not bear during the time of His sojourn among them, and for the saying of which they had to wait for the coming of the Spirit, as He distinctly said: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit

when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He shall guide you into all the truth."[1]

Our present theme is not that of the Church in those larger aspects revealed in the course of the Pauline writings; but that of the Church in its relationship to the Kingdom of God, and that only as the subject is dealt with in the teaching of Jesus.

The records give two explicit references to the Church in the teaching of our Lord; and it is not without significance that both these are found in the Gospel according to Matthew, which is peculiarly the Gospel of the King and of the Kingdom. Had there been anything in the nature of contradiction between the idea of the Kingdom and that of the Church, the one evangelist most likely to omit reference to the Church would have been the man whose passion was that of the Kingdom, and whose vision was that of the King. But this man alone has recorded, as evidently of supreme importance to his own thinking and in his own conception, the two occasions upon which our Lord referred definitely and explicitly to the Church.

One of these two statements is singularly explicit as to the nature and office of the Church; explicit, that is, in the sense of being a simple statement, waiting for further interpretation and development, but absolutely clear. "Upon this rock I will build My Church."[2] There is nothing more to be said concerning the nature of the Church, if that one saying of Jesus be understood. In connection with that declaration He spoke of the twofold function of the Church in time, and in this world. First, "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."[2] It is an army at war, conquering, and leading an exodus out of all bondage, even that of death. Secondly, "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom."[3] The Church is entrusted with responsibility concerning the ethic of heaven for the gov-

[1] John xvi. 12, 13. [2] Matt. xvi. 18. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 19

ernment of earth. If these words of Jesus be perfectly apprehended, nothing remains to be said concerning either the nature or function of the Church so far as this world is concerned; but even then there is no hint of the ultimate and eternal values which are revealed by the Spirit through the apostolic writings.

The facts concerning our Lord's teaching on the subject are these. First, that after the confession of Peter He explicitly declared His purpose to build His Church; and described its twofold function in the history of the world. Secondly, that after that announcement He repeatedly spoke to His disciples in a corporate capacity; and in so doing He assumed the Church, which He had declared it was His purpose to build. And thirdly, that a careful examination of these references will show how closely He connected the Church with the Kingdom, considering her ever as His instrument for its revelation to men, and its establishment in the world.

After He had made His great declaration at Cæsarea Philippi, He addressed them, not so much as individuals, but as a company, a fellowship, an assembly, a corporate body; or to use His word, an Ecclesia, a called-out assembly of men. From that time He took for granted, not that they were already the Church in the full sense of the word, but that He was speaking to them as they would be, after the Pentecostal effusion whereby they should be baptized into new union with Himself, and so constitute the Church which He had announced His intention to build.

That is seen in the group of Scriptures prefacing this meditation. In reading them we pass from Cæsarea Philippi to the moment of the ultimate commission, noting some occasions on which, under various circumstances and with different intentions, the Lord spoke to His disciples in groups, as to a corporate body. There can be no selection of passages such as these, which on careful reading does

not impress the mind with the fact that while He spoke to them as a Church, He was always thinking of the Kingdom, and was preparing them for very definite fulfillment of a position in the world in the interests of that Kingdom.

Our consideration will gather around the explicit statements and the subsequent references; dealing with the statements only in one regard, that of their relation to the Kingdom, and glancing at the references in the same way.

We come first then to the scene at Cæsarea Philippi, and listen once again to the words in this particular way. Our Lord's confession concerning His Church was made in answer to Peter's confession that He was the Messiah. The whole Messianic hope of the Hebrew people was connected with the establishment of the Kingdom of God. That they did not understand the nature of that ultimate Kingdom is no argument as against this fact. That they also had become materialized in their thinking, and were failing to understand that the foundations of God's Kingdom, even in material things, must always be spiritual, does not affect the fact. They were all looking for His Kingdom; and they were looking for the King Whose business it should be to establish that Kingdom. When at last, one of their number, after comradeship with Jesus for two years and a half, looked into His eyes and said, "Thou art the Messiah,"[1] it was a confession that at last there had appeared in the fullness of times, the King Whose business it should be to establish the Kingdom.

Our Lord immediately accepted that confession; with the pronouncement of blessing upon the man who had thus been illuminated by God, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven"; and then straightway proceeded to utter these words concerning the

[1] Matt. xvi. 16.

Church: "Upon this rock I will build My Church." When one man out of the past economy, illuminated from above, said "Thou art the Messiah King"; He said, On the basis of that confession, and upon that eternal fact on which the confession rests, I will build My Church. That was not a departure from the Kingdom ideal. It was not an abandonment of the Kingdom purpose. It was not a refusal of the Kingly crown. It was an acceptance of the Kingly crown, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah"; and now that the crown is placed upon My brow, not merely in the Divine economy, but by the consent of one illuminated soul, I will proceed; "I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."[1]

Observe also in this connection that the terms which He employed to describe the function of the Church are directly related to Kingdom ideas. What was the meaning of the declaration that the gates of Hades should not prevail against it? Our Lord used two entirely different figures in such close connection that sometimes we have forgotten the difference between them. First: "I will build My Church." Secondly: "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." The first idea is that of the building of a house, using the word house in its largest sense. The second idea is that of an army marching forth to war.

This second figure deals with the function of the Church, suggesting the presence of anarchy, and recognizing the opposing forces of evil. We have considered in a previous study how perpetually the Lord was conscious of these facts; how, notwithstanding that the vision of the Kingdom of God was ever before Him in all its glory and beauty, He was also conscious of the opposition of evil, and that He was exercising His Kingdom ministry in the midst of anarchy. On the first occasion of reference to His Church

[1] Matt. xvi. 17, 18.

He used a figure that suggests war with the anarchy, opposition to the opposition: "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

Passing from that figure to the next, the terms again suggest and, indeed, actually name the Kingdom idea: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of heaven."[1] From the midst of the anarchy, appeal was made for a true authority. I do not suggest that the appeal was intelligent or volitional, but to Him it was none the less real. False rulers and false authority were influencing the people to evil courses, and ruining them; and Jesus ever saw them distressed and scattered; and heard the unconscious appeal of their agony for a true authority. Therefore when He first spoke of His Church, He said to the representative of the Church, I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom. What you bind shall be bound. What you loose shall be loosed. All these terms move in the atmosphere of the Kingdom idea.

Thus it is evident that when at Cæsarea Philippi He was confessed King intelligently by Peter, Christ did not abandon the thought of the Kingdom. As He declared that He would build His Church, it is clear that in His own mind the interest of the Kingdom was supreme; and that the temporal value of the Church He would build would be that of its coöperation with Him, in His passion and His mission, for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Let us take with equal brevity the next explicit reference. The preliminary question that led up to the reference was asked by His disciples: "Who then is greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?"[2] In answer to that enquiry He proceeded with His teaching, and ended His teaching by a parable, which commenced, "Therefore is the Kingdom of heaven likened unto."[3]

Between this question and parable, we find His second

[1] Matt. xvi. 19. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 1. [3] *Ibid.*, xviii. 23.

reference to the Church. It was a mere allusion to what He had already said. The child was set in the midst of them, and He addressed them as a body of men in their more corporate capacity. The very act was symbolic. In the midst the child. Do not be afraid of the pictorial. See Him and His disciples, and the child in the midst. It was singularly suggestive of a corporate relationship, of a responsibility which rested, not upon individuals, but upon the whole of them. Having put the child there, He proceeded to talk to them about the Kingdom. He gave them the great law of Christian discipline, discipline within the Church. "If thy brother sin against thee, go, shew him his fault, between thee and him alone," [1] and do this in order to gain him, not in order to damn him! And if you do not gain him, take one or two others of the same circle, always to gain him; but if he will not hear the two, tell it to *the Church*.

It was only a reference, an allusion; but all the light of the declaration at Cæsarea Philippi flashes upon the word, and we have the vision of this new entity, this corporate body. There they are, twelve men, with a child in the midst. And if he will not hear the Church, "let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican." [2] What sort of man is the Gentile and the publican? A man to be cursed? No. What then? The man for whom Christ died! And so, if the brother cannot be won, he is to be treated by the Church as a man for whom the Church will die in order that he may be saved!

All this is the atmosphere of the Kingdom; and the Church is seen as embodying the great facts of the Kingdom. Moral authority;—"What things soever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and what things soever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Spiritual power;—"If two of you shall agree on earth as

[1] Matt. xviii. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, xviii. 17

touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven." All this because of the presence of the King: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." [1] Christ and the child in the midst; that is the Church; and for to-day, that is the Kingdom.

From these words of Jesus we travel back to an old prophecy. The prophet Zechariah climbed higher than most of his order, and gazing across the centuries and millenniums to the glorious hour when the Kingdom of God should be established, he described what he saw in the words: "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." [2] That is the ultimate Kingdom of God on earth. And now, said Jesus, you, My disciples, My ecclesia, My Church, having moral power and spiritual dynamic, you are that for to-day; the child is in the midst, and I am in the midst. I have not abandoned My Kingdom; I have come to realize it first within your borders; and I have come to realize it within your borders in order that it may be interpreted to the world.

Let us now glance at some of His subsequent references, in which He spoke to these men as to a corporate body, a Church, and yet constantly concerning a Kingdom.

Ten men were indignant at the request of two. Two had asked that they might sit on His right hand and on His left, when He should come in His Kingdom. I am not interested in their indignation, or even in the request, only in order to emphasize the fact that it was for power as within His coming Kingdom. But how did the Lord answer? By teaching them the law of greatness in the Church, by putting the Church into contrast with the kingdoms of men. In that passage [3] we have a most graphic picture of all human kingdoms, even until this hour, as to

[1] Matt. xviii. 18–20. [2] Zech. viii. 5. [3] Matt. xx. 24–28.

order of precedence. Your great ones exercise authority over you, and their great ones exercise authority over them. That is to say, there are gradations of authority. The mass of the people are ruled by rulers; the rulers are ruled by higher rulers; and greatness is calculated by the grade of authority. "Not so shall it be among you." He that would occupy the position of ultimate greatness among you is not the one who exercises authority, but yields to it! The lowest grade,—borrowing the phrase from a world that has largely forgotten God,—the grade that serves, is greatest in the ultimate Kingdom of God. The supreme eagerness of souls in the ultimate Kingdom will not be to rule men, but to serve. Christ said that this rule of the Kingdom is to be the rule of the Church. It is to be realized in the Church, and so manifested to the world. One of the secrets why the Church of God has failed, and is failing still, is that in this respect she has never yet realized her Master's ideals.

There had been a symbolic judgment of a fig-tree, on His way to Jerusalem for those last august acts by which He flung the Hebrew nation aside as an instrument of the Kingdom of God.[1] The disciples were astonished, and He said, speaking to them in their corporate capacity, that if they had faith, much mightier things than these should they do. He contrasted the power of faith with the failure of the people who had lost that power of faith, and who therefore were like the fig-tree, doomed to judgment. He put over against the failure of the Hebrew people,—with which He was then dealing from the standpoint of an official authority,—this power of faith, this power of prayer.[2] It was all in the Kingdom atmosphere, but He was talking to His disciples, to the men who were to become the Church.

At last the King did finally and definitely, and with great

[1] Matt. xxi. 43. [2] *Ibid.*, xxi. 21, 22.

clearness, pronounce the word of rejection against the Hebrew people, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [1] In that word, full of solemnity, we are at the heart of the present line of thought, for it was the declaration of the transference of Kingdom responsibility, for the time being, from the Hebrew people to the new Ecclesia, to the new Theocracy, to the Church which He was about to build.

Later still He gave instructions to His disciples as to their responsibilities, by revealing the failure of the scribes and Pharisees. He first recognized an official position which the scribes and Pharisees had occupied in the economy of God. "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." Then He spoke directly to His disciples: "Be not ye called Rabbi . . . call no man your father . . . neither be ye called masters." [2] Thus He revealed to them the order of the new Kingdom, and the secrets of the new authority. One is your Teacher, and He did not name the One. His reference was to the Holy Spirit, yet to come. One is your Father, and the declaration is self-evident, that He was referring to the Father Whom He had come to reveal. One is your Master, and He at once claimed that He Himself occupied that position. All this was teaching intended to show these men that they were to exercise moral authority; not by claiming the titles which the Rabbis had claimed, but by being themselves taught of the great Teacher; not by calling other men father, in some official way, and yielding themselves to a false authority, but by recognizing their relationship to the eternal authority, and their right of access to God for the discovery of His will; not by being themselves looked upon as masters

[1] Matt. xxi. 43. [2] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 8–12.

of men, but by being yielded to the mastery of Christ. Thus they were to learn the secrets of morality, and exercise His authority in the world.

The Olivet prophecy was uttered in answer to the inquiry of His disciples, as to when certain things should take place that He had predicted.[1] It is a great prophecy, covering three phases, and yet is permeated from first to last with the consciousness of the Kingdom and of the Church; dealing first with that period which culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem; dealing secondly with the period from then until the hour of His second advent; dealing finally with that august and wonderful day in which He will be the Judge of the nations, testing them by their relationship in that final movement to Israel, but through the long processes by their relationship to the nation that has been responsible for the Kingdom of God. Throughout the prophecy the Kingdom of God is the master thought; and the Church is seen as the instrument of that Kingdom in the economy of God.

The Lord was present at the final Hebrew feast. His paschal teaching[2] is that of the fact of the transference of Passover. The festival celebrated the hour when the Kingdom was formed by redemption in the old economy. In a night much to be remembered, God broke the power of the oppressor, and led His people towards the sea, and through the sea, and said to them, I have brought you to Myself, a nation. He created the Hebrew people a Kingdom by redemption. Passover celebrated it.

Here let us use a word of Paul. "Our passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ."[3] Let the light of that declaration fall upon what happened. He transferred Passover from that old economy, and from that ancient people who had failed to bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom, to

[1] Matt. xxiv., xxv. [2] *Ibid.*, xxvi. [3] 1 Cor. v. 7.

this new economy, and to these new people who were to be responsible for the fruits of the Kingdom; and He instituted a feast in connection with the redemption by which the new Kingdom was to be founded.

In that connection He referred to yet another transference, and another day, which has not yet come, as He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom."[1] That was a glance far ahead, to ultimate things, to that hour to which the apostle referred when he said, "Then cometh the end, when He (the Son) shall deliver up the Kingdom to God."[2] The burden of all is that of the Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, its establishment, its realization, its victory.

At last we come to Galilee, to the mountain where He appointed to meet them, to the only appearance after resurrection which Matthew records, to the one appearance which is in harmony with all the process of his Gospel. Now He said: "All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and disciple the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the consummation of the age."[3] That is the voice of the King, it is the commission of the Kingdom; it is the declaration that His Church is to go to the nations and deal with them as nations, by dealing with the individuals that make up the national life; always remembering the value of the individual to the national life; and forevermore having at heart a passion for the establishment of the Kingdom of God, and the bringing of all the nations within that Kingdom. The Kingdom responsibility for proclamation and instruction was thus given

[1] Matt. xxvi. 29. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 24. [3] Matt. xxviii. 18–20.

to the Church in that final Kingdom commission of our Lord.

From this rapid survey of the teaching of Jesus certain things are clearly evident.

First, that the Church has, for the time being, superseded the Hebrew people in the economy of God in the matter of responsibility for the Kingdom of God on earth. Jesus said to the rulers, "The Kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." [1] After resurrection His disciples said to Him, "Dost Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?" [2] The bearing of that question is only discovered as we remember His denunciation of the Hebrew people. He had cast them out. That is why His disciples asked Him after resurrection: Has the time come to restore the Kingdom to Israel? He did not say that such a time will never come, but, "It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within His own authority. But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." [3]

Finally we learn that the Church will fulfill her responsibility for the manifestation of the Kingdom of God by the crowning of the King; by yielding herself to His rule; by realizing within her own borders His ideals; by manifesting these things to the world without; by waging unceasing war against all the forces in opposition; by proclamation of His great evangel, whereby men individually may be brought into His Kingdom; by testimony to His moral standards; and by persistent, perpetual prayer in the secret Place.

[1] Matt. xxi. 43. [2] Acts i. 6. [3] *Ibid.*, i. 7, 8.

VI. THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES—THE CONFLICT

"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."—*Matthew v. 10–12.*

"Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and as harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for My sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you. And brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child: and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."—*x. 16–22.*

"Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword! For I came to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that doth not take his cross and follow after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it."—*x. 34–39.*

"Another parable set He before them, saying, The Kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man that sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. And the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? whence then hath it tares? And he said unto them, An enemy hath done this. And the servants say unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he saith, Nay; lest haply while ye gather up the tares, ye root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."—*xiii. 24–30.*

"And He answered and said, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; and the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one; and the enemy that sowed them is the devil: and the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are angels."—*xiii. 37–39.*

"And I also say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."—*xvi. 18.*

"Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."—*xvi. 24.*

"Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes, some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of Abel the righteous to the blood of Zachariah, son of Barachiah, whom ye slew between the sanctuary and the altar."—*xxiii. 34, 35.*

. . . . . .

"If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me."—*John xv. 19–21.*

"These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—*xvi. 33.*

VI

THE REDEMPTIVE PROCESSES— THE CONFLICT

THE proclamation and propagation of the Kingdom of God in the midst of abounding anarchy must necessarily produce conflict. That needs no argument. It has been demonstrated in human history first by the experience of the Hebrew people; and now for two millenniums by the experience of the Christian Church; but centrally by the life of Christ, and by the fact of His Cross. Because the Church of God is to-day the instrument of that proclamation and propaganda, she must still share in that conflict.

Our present theme is that of our Lord's teaching concerning that conflict, or rather concerning her part therein during the present age. There are other aspects of the conflict between anarchy and authority, between the forces of evil and those of righteousness, with which we are not now dealing; other aspects of the conflict in the future, with which we are not now concerned. We are now considering the conflict of the Church in the interest of the Kingdom, as revealed in the teaching of our Lord. We shall consider first the fact of the conflict; and secondly the nature of the conflict.

From the opening of His more formal propaganda in Galilee, which was followed almost immediately by the enunciation of His ethic in the presence of His own disciples on the mount, throughout the whole of His ministry and in all His teaching, it is quite evident that our Lord recognized this fact of conflict. It was clearly indicated in the closing beatitude of the great Manifesto when He spoke

of the blessedness that rests on such as are persecuted for His sake. It was plainly foretold in the first commission given to the twelve, which was largely local and limited, and which was ultimately superseded by the larger commission beyond resurrection. He explained the fact in His special parabolic teaching concerning the Kingdom. He recognized it when at Cæsarea Philippi He spoke for the first time of His Church, and of His Cross. He announced the fact of the continuity of that conflict to His enemies in the last solemn words that He spoke to them. Finally, in the secret and sacred sanctity of those hours in the upper room, when talking to His own disciples, and delivering to them His final comfort and charge, He distinctly foretold the inevitability of this conflict.

Evidently, then, as our Lord looked through the age to its consummation, He saw His people engaged in ceaseless conflict with the forces that were opposed to Himself, and are opposed to the Kingdom of God. Let us glance at these words of Jesus, in each case a little more particularly.

The words selected from the Manifesto constituted the final double beatitude. Let us remind ourselves once more that they were spoken to His disciples, who for the moment were realizing the Kingdom by submission to the King. When in Galilee the multitudes gathered about Him, our Lord left the crowds in order to reach them more perfectly; He then gathered about Him His disciples; and to His own subjects He uttered the great Manifesto. It is perfectly true that the crowds followed and listened; but it is equally true, and never to be forgotten, that the Sermon on the Mount was spoken to His own disciples, and was intended for them, and for them alone, in the first place. He was speaking therefore to these men in whom the Kingdom ideal was realized, so far as it was possible at the moment, by the fact that they had crowned God's appointed and anointed

King. In speaking to these men in whom the Kingdom ideal was realized in a measure, He was speaking to the Church that was to be. Our previous meditation endeavoured to show how Kingdom responsibility is now vested within the Christian Church. In speaking to them, with a backward look, recognizing all that had been wrought in the ancient Hebrew economy by faithful souls, He said: "Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven." [1] Then looking at the men who were close to Him, and referring to the new Kingdom movement which would issue from His own ministry and work, He said: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." [2] In these words our Lord recognized the fact of perpetual opposition to the Kingdom of God, and the consequent suffering of those who, loyal thereto, proclaim it to men. The prophets of the old, and the messengers of the new economies, alike experience suffering resulting from the opposition of evil to the Kingdom of God.

When sending out His twelve disciples to the fulfillment of their first apostolic mission, He sent them to preach the Kingdom. He spoke to them of the immediate difficulties, and told them that they would suffer for His sake; declared to them that presently the difficulties would become even greater; that they would be sent out as sheep in the midst of wolves, describing with remarkable and detailed accuracy the actual experiences through which they passed between our Lord's ascension and the destruction of Jerusalem. Then looking on through the following centuries, He said, "Think not that I came to send peace on the earth: I

[1] Matt. v. 10. [2] Matt. v. 11. 12.

came not to send peace, but a sword!"[1] So He recognized and emphasized, in the hearing of the men whom He was first sending forth with the great message of the Kingdom, the fact that the proclamation of the Kingdom must issue in strife, in conflict, and in suffering.

The parabolic teaching of the thirteenth chapter of Matthew is full of the recognition of the fact. The element of conflict runs through all the parables, revealing not final things concerning the Kingdom, but processes leading towards the final things. As we read the parables we discover all through two forces opposed to each other. In one of the parables this particular teaching is made clear; the work of the enemy is that of the planting of darnel in the field of God; the planting of that which is an almost exact imitation of wheat in its earliest stages, but which, in later development, proves to be its opposite.

In the words spoken at Cæsarea Philippi, declaring that He would build His Church, we find that His first word concerning the function of the Church recognized the conflict that is to come. "The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."[2] In that sentence the Church's warfare was revealed in a flash; and the condition of fellowship with Him in that warfare was laid down in His subsequent words: "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."[3]

When speaking to His enemies, after the final woes had passed His lips, He said, "I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes"; [4] not, I have sent them to you, but I will send them to you, a declaration of His determination to persist in the proclamation of the Kingdom for their sake through a new ministry. I will send to you prophets, speakers for God, wise men who shall be winners of souls,

[1] Matt. x. 34.
[2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 34.

scribes who shall be interpreters of the law; but you will scourge them, crucify them, fling them out. Thus here again He declared the fact of the persistence, both of the King and His enemies through the coming days; the fact, therefore, of the continuity of the conflict.

Finally in those last discourses in the upper room, He told His disciples that the conflict would be inevitable; but ended everything with the word of courage, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." [1]

This rapid survey of some of the outstanding words of Jesus concerning this conflict cannot fail to make some very definite impressions on the mind.

The first is that of the unusualness of this conflict. This is marked in the fact that everything was entirely unlike warfare as we have known it in the history of the world. The methods of the soldiers of the Kingdom are not those of earthly strife. They seem to do nothing. They seem to offer no resistance. In no teaching of our Lord concerning these men is there any description of a campaign on their part which appears to be likely to match the campaign of those who are opposed to them. Indeed, we are impressed by the perpetual and persistent defeat of the King's army. They are always persecuted. They are always suffering. They are constantly crucified. They are as sheep in the midst of wolves; and in that one master figure of speech the whole position is revealed. That is not warfare as men understand it, and yet that is the characteristic of the conflict as described in the teaching of our Lord.

Over against that we must place another fact which is equally impressive, the abounding confidence and persistent hopefulness of His outlook. Never a tremor of doubt; no suggestion of ultimate failure; the perpetual declaration of continuity of suffering and defeat; and yet this, buoy-

[1] John xvi. 33.

antly, hopefully, confidently anticipated! This optimism is not the optimism of One Who is hoping against hope, or Who is blind to the facts of the case. As we study the teaching of the Lord, we discover that, according to His conception of the conflict, the soldiers of the Kingdom who offer no resistance are by that fact offering resistance. The soldiers of the Kingdom, who are constantly being scourged and crucified and driven out, are by that fact walking triumphantly after their overcoming Lord, Who Himself did overcome by this process of defeat. As a matter of fact in these very methods that astonish us are the secret sources of strength, and they constitute the sure way to the ultimate victory. By defeat they are to win; by dying they are to live; by crucifixion they are to come to crowning; by non-resistance they are to resist; by taking no sword of the flesh in their hand they are to master all such as use the sword of the flesh.

Now with these general impressions upon the mind, let us examine a little more closely the nature of this strange conflict as it is revealed to us in the teaching of our Lord; no longer referring to particular passages, but endeavouring so far as we are able to deduce from the whole teaching a statement as to the nature of this conflict.

We may summarize the whole story in the simplest way by declaring that in this conflict the weapons of the forces against the King are carnal; while the weapons of the forces that fight for the King are spiritual. The root principle of anarchy is that of godlessness. That is a word so common in our speech, and so easily uttered that one almost trembles lest its profound significance and its many-sided application may be lost sight of. All the forces that are against the King are against the King because they are godless, they put God out of account. Godlessness in His own day, as in our day, is not necessarily that of speech,

but godlessness in the actuality of the deepest inner life. It may be that the name of God is reverently spoken, while yet those naming it have no dealings with God, save that of antagonism to His claims. All the forces revealed to us in the New Testament, in the actuality of our Lord's conflict, or in the revelation of His teaching, are forces resulting from, and acting in response to the inspiration of godlessness.

Let us go farther, and enquire, what is the consciousness of those who are acting in answer to the impulse of their actual godlessness? The consciousness is ever that of love of self, of self-consideration; and consequent hatred of all that opposes self-interest. There are many manifestations revealed in the New Testament, and many more in the course of the ages; but underneath every one is the love of self, consideration of self, self-interest. What shall *we* eat; what shall *we* drink; wherewithal shall *we* be clothed? Let *us* eat and drink, for to-morrow *we* die. These are words of the simplest, perpetually quoted, yet they are flaming in revelation; the emphasis is always upon the self-life, the self-interest, the self-pleasure. Forgetfulness of God, consideration of self; dethronement of God, enthronement of self; and wherever this is the master passion of the life, then hatred of all that opposes follows; hatred of God, hatred of the prophets who speak in His name, hatred of the letter which reveals His law; hatred of all which, coming from Him, would set restraint upon human life in order to realize it in all its beauty and in all its fullness within His great and gracious Kingdom.

Such forces, inspired by godlessness, conscious of the desire for self-pleasing, and of hatred of all that hinders, fling themselves against the Kingdom of God, and against the messengers of the Kingdom of God; and they do so by employing the weapons of the self-life,—lying, murder, and hypocrisy. Of course that is to strip a great many

things of false nomenclature, and to name them according to what they really are; for in a day like this we look back to the early days of persecution, and then we look around and say, all the forces of opposition have retired. No, they have but changed their method of attack, they have accommodated their opposition to the more subtle forms which have been made necessary in the age in which we live. Lying to-day is more refined in its methods, but it is none the less prevalent. Murder in the olden days, in the early experiences of the Church, was the actual killing of the saints; but now men indulge in those subtler forms of murder, revealed in the ethic of Jesus, in which He declared that hatred in the heart towards another man is equivalent in the economy of God to the murder of the man. Hypocrisy persists though it has changed its masks. All the weapons of evil in this warfare are carnal; lying, murder, and hypocrisy mass themselves, organize themselves, against the Kingdom of God, to prevent its coming, to refuse its claims.

Turning to observe the attitudes, the consciousness, and the weapons of the soldier of the King as they are revealed in the teaching of our Lord, one word will suffice to define that out of which everything else springs; the root-principle is godliness, the return to God, the recognition of God, the remembrance of the fact of His rule, the submission to that rule, the yielding of all to Him. Out of that everything springs. There can be no fight on behalf of God on the part of men who are godless. No man has any power to bring in the Kingdom of God, who excludes the Kingship of God from his own life. It is quite possible for men to pray in multitudes, "Thy Kingdom come," but the prayer rises no higher than where the sound expires, unless the Kingdom has come in the life of the men who pray. A recognition of that fact affords an explanation of the per

petual terms of sifting and searching severity of which our Lord made use, in the days of His personal propaganda. How the multitudes flocked after Him, and how He held them back! How easily they would have crowned Him upon the basis of the fact that He was able to provide them with bread; and with what solemn resolutions of purpose He declined to be so crowned! He declared that if men would come after Him, to His Kingdom, and the establishment of the Kingdom of God, they must begin by such submission to Himself as should indicate their return to God, not theoretically but practically. Godliness, as opposed to godlessness; that is the nakedness of the fight from beginning to end.

And further, when we look at these soldiers of the King, and when we listen to the King, we discover that their consciousness is in direct opposition to that of the forces against the King. On the one hand love of self and hatred of all opposing. On the other, love of God, and infinite compassion for men.

This at once shows how impossible it is for the soldiers of the King to fight with the weapons which are employed by their enemies. Consciousness of self and hatred of all that opposes will use carnal weapons; but love of God, and compassion for the men that oppose Him, will decline to use such weapons. The weapons of the soldiers of the King are truth, salvation, and sincerity. Truth opposes itself to all lying; a consuming passion to save enters into conflict with hatred; and sincerity challenges hypocrisy.

Now let us observe the forces as they come together in the actuality of conflict. As to the root principles, godlessness confronts godliness; it is armed with sword, and fire, and rack, subtle and devilish means of causing pains to others; but godliness is armed with truth and love and sincerity, the instruments of saving others. Mark them in

conflict. Which will be victorious? Let me quote in this connection a great word of the apostle Paul in writing to Timothy. Apart from its profoundest values, it throws light on this matter also. "Great is the mystery of godliness; He was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, received up in glory."[1] That is the story of the triumph of godliness. How did godliness reach that triumph? By defeat; by being bruised and wounded and murdered; by the appalling mystery of the fact that when He was reviled He reviled not again; that He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. By that non-resistance in the power of the carnal, He resisted in the power of the spiritual; and came to a twofold triumph, past and ultimate.

Or look at the actuality of the conflict as between the consciousness of the forces that oppose, and the consciousness of the soldiers of the King. On the one side, self-consideration, which hates all that opposes; on the other, that self-emptying which loves even such as oppose. Which is to win? In the heart of the classic passage in the writings of Paul on love, there flames and flashes one statement with exquisite and never-fading beauty; the ultimate word of all the argument is this, "Love never faileth." Yet how it seems to fail, but it never fails! Love is bruised, and wins by its bruising. Love is left upon the highway, destitute, tormented, afflicted, and by that willingness to be left, triumphs over every force opposed to it, "Love never faileth."[2]

Next consider the opposition as between the weapons that are carnal and those that are spiritual. In his second letter to the Corinthian Christians Paul said, "We do not war according to the flesh (for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but mighty before God to the casting

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [2] 1 Cor. xiii. 8.

down of strongholds); casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." [1] These are the victorious weapons, those that deal, not with external manifestations, but with the inspirational centres of human life; casting down imaginations, dealing with the underlying reasons of things, and capturing these and turning them to good. Thus the ultimate victory of the Kingdom is to be won.

The conflict is persistent, and the way is still the same. The Church of God has always failed when she has turned to other weapons, and to carnal methods. Christ's first words to His disciples, after He had spoken of the Church, were terrible and stern words, but necessary, "Get thee behind Me, Satan; thou art a stumbling-block unto Me: for thou mindest not the things of God, but the things of men." [2] Our Lord had spoken of His Church; of building it; of its victory over all forces including death itself; of His disciples as holding the keys of the Kingdom; and all the words were the words of a propaganda moving towards victory. Then He had told them that the way to the crown was the way of the Cross. And Peter, spokesman of the Church through all time, save as she is indeed taught of the Spirit, said, "Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall never be unto Thee." [3] In those words he protested against the idea that in order to the establishment of the Kingdom there must be no carnal fighting; that all the fighting must be the cessation of fighting; that the dynamic of resistance is the end of resistance. That be far from Thee, said Peter. No Church will be built that way. The gates of Hades will never yield to such methods. The keys of the Kingdom cannot long be held by such ideas. And Jesus said, "Get Thee behind Me, Satan," thou art measur-

[1] 2 Cor. x. 3–5. [2] Matt. xvi. 23. [3] *Ibid.*, xvi. 22.

ing My campaign by the ways of men, hoping to establish My Kingdom by the way that other kingdoms have been established, all of which perish and fail. "Get thee behind Me, Satan."

And at last, under the olive shades of Gethsemane, speaking to the selfsame man, our Lord said, "Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."[1] The history of the Church from that day until now demonstrates the truth of that word of Jesus. A little over three centuries ago, men in our own country took the sword and removed the king; but the king came back. Men at the same time suffered the loss of all things, and struck no blow in defense; but they won the victory of spiritual freedom which abides until this hour. The coming of the Kingdom of God will never be by the sword. Defeat is still our way of victory. The loss that a man suffers for the Kingdom of God is the gain of the Kingdom in the place of his suffering, and the assurance of the ultimate triumph. Not by any carnal weapons are we to fight this warfare, not by any means which men employ for the establishment and the strengthening of earthly kingdoms, will this Kingdom be brought in and established. Lowell saw far indeed when he sang:

"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne,—
Yet that scaffold sways the future, and, behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above His own.

. . . . . .

Count me o'er earth's chosen heroes,—they were souls that stood alone,
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone,
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,
By one man's plain truth to manhood and to God's supreme design.

[1] Matt. xxvi. 52.

"By the light of burning heretics Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever with the cross that turns not back,
And these mounts of anguish number how each generation learned
One new word of that grand *Credo* which in prophet-hearts hath burned
Since the first man stood, God-conquered with his face to heaven upturned.

"For Humanity sweeps onward: where to-day the martyr stands,
On the morrow crouches Judas with the silver in his hands;
Far in front the cross stands ready and the crackling fagots burn,
While the hooting mob of yesterday in silent awe return
To glean up the scattered ashes into History's golden urn." [1]

"I came not to send peace, but a sword." [2]

"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal." [3]

"In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." [4]

[1] The Present Crisis.
[2] Matt. x. 34.
[3] 2 Cor. x. 4.
[4] John xvi. 33.

VII. THE CRISIS

"Who do men say that the Son of Man is? . . . Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—*Matthew xvi. 13, 16.*

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds."—*xvi. 27.*

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."—*xx. 28.*

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."—*xxiv. 35.*

. . . . . .

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. . . . Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their Lord."—*Luke xii. 32, 35, 36.*

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost."—*xix. 10.*

"I appoint unto you a Kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom; and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."—*xxii. 29, 30.*

VII

THE CRISIS

When dealing with some of the phases of the Kingdom as indicated in the references of Jesus, we noted as the final fact that the Kingdom is to be established on the earth by processes, culminating in a crisis. With the processes we have dealt; the Cross as fundamental; the Church as instrumental; and the conflict as experiential.

Coming now to the crisis to which our Lord referred, we have immediately to recognize how large a place the subject occupied in the teaching of Jesus. He said far more concerning His advent than He did concerning either His Cross or His Church.

We will, therefore, first survey the field; secondly, examine the first explicit declaration; and finally, attempt to summarize the facts revealed.

In surveying the teaching of Jesus on this subject, we shall confine ourselves to those words of the Lord in which He distinctly dealt with the second advent in its bearing on the Kingdom; omitting all references to that advent which had other reasons and other applications. In referring to this subject He had two methods, which we may describe as parabolic, and specific; and we shall group His sayings in that way.

The parables of the Kingdom may be divided into two groups, those delivered in set discourse, recorded in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew; and those incidentally spoken upon other occasions, and almost exclusively to His disciples, even if in the hearing of the crowd. In the thirteenth chapter of Matthew we have seven parables dealing directly with the Kingdom of heaven, those of the sower, the

darnel, the mustard-seed, the leaven, the treasure, the pearl, and the drag-net; and a final one setting forth the responsibility of those who have this teaching, that of the householder.

In so far as these parables deal with the processes of the Kingdom, they reveal a conflict; the continued opposition of two persistent activities, antagonistic to each other; or else they reveal some selective activity which finds treasure in the earth and takes it out therefrom, but still leaves the Kingdom unestablished.

Or, to put the matter into slightly different form, in these parables of the thirteenth chapter, we have teaching concerning the Kingdom, but nothing final; no description of its ultimate conditions, no description of the prevailing glories; only a description of certain processes through which the Kingdom passes, only pictures covering a certain period of time, and revealing the movement towards a Kingdom. That period is one of conflict, of antagonism, or, as I have already said, of the operation of two opposing activities.

In two of these parables a definite crisis is referred to; that of the darnel, and that of the drag-net. In each of them our Lord referred to "the consummation of the age," not the end of all the ages, but the consummation of one particular age, the age which He was then describing in His parables. He declared, moreover, in each of these two parables that the consummation of the age would be brought about by some definite interposition of His own. Neither in the parable of the darnel, nor that of the drag-net did He make any definite reference to His personal advent, but He did declare that He would take hold of the reins of authority, and sending His angels into the midst of human affairs, would separate between the evil and the good, casting out of the Kingdom all the things of evil, and bringing to final fruition and glory the things of goodness which have resulted from the operation of His servants through the processes.

Thus in these two parables, the truth is clearly revealed, that the final victory over evil is to be won by a definite crisis under His own guidance, His own authority, and His own administration.

Glancing next at those which were incidentally spoken, we find three definitely dealing with the relation of His advent to the Kingdom.

The first is that of the waiting servants, recorded by Luke. The crisis for which these servants were bidden to wait was that of the return of their lord and master. This parable is closely linked to that gracious word of Jesus, "Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."[1] Having said that, He told His disciples how they might come into possession of that which it was their Father's good pleasure to give them. They were to sell what they had, and invest their wealth as members of His Kingdom in such a way as to bring the Kingdom. He finally illuminated that instruction by the parable beginning: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning; and be ye yourselves like men looking for their lord."[2]

The next is the parable of the labourers in the vineyard, recorded by Matthew.[3] Notice the crisis of eventide, when the master comes, and the servants appear before him to receive the rewards of toil.

The last is the parable of the marriage feast, also recorded by Matthew.[4] The particular value of this in our present study is that of the crisis created when the King Himself appears, and the man without the wedding garment is sent forth into the darkness outside the Kingdom. Thus in all the parabolic teaching a crisis was referred to; and it is quite clear that, in the mind of the Lord, the crisis would be created by His own return.

[1] Luke xii. 32.
[2] *Ibid.*, xii. 35.
[3] Matt. xx. 1–16.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxii. 1–14.

All this, however, was not merely referred to in parabolic teaching; it was definitely stated. At Cæsarea Philippi He for the first time explicitly declared that He would come again. Each of the evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, place that declaration for the first time in that particular relation. After the confession of Peter, after the avowed purpose of building the Church, after the declared necessity for the way of the Cross, He said, "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his doing."[1] Quite clearly, according to that declaration of our Lord, His own personal advent is to constitute the crisis by which the Kingdom will be established.

In the Olivet prophecies[2] the same truth was clearly declared. The culmination of the conflict would be when He, the Son of Man, should come; the responsibility of stewards during the period of His absence was always to be fulfilled in the light of His return; and when, looking through the centuries, He foretold the hour of national reconstruction, He associated it with His own coming, declaring that He would return, and before Him the nations should be gathered together, and that under His supervision the great work should go forward.

Finally, under the shadow of the Cross, in His last discourse with His own disciples, He said unto them, "I appoint unto you a Kingdom, even as My Father appointed unto Me"; and to the twelve, His apostles, He said, "Ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[3]

Now this is to sweep over the whole ground of His teaching, not to interpret it in detail, but to lay emphasis upon the fact that whether He was mistaken or not, if these records are to be trusted, He confidently affirmed, and persistently declared, that He Himself would actually and per-

[1] Matt. xvi. 27. [2] *Ibid.*, xxiv., xxv. [3] Luke xxii. 29, 30.

sonally return, and that by that return the crisis would arrive in which the processes of this period would find fulfillment, and the Kingdom of God would be established.

But now, in order to a little more careful consideration, we concentrate upon what has been already described as the first explicit declaration: "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds." [1]

It requires a very great deal of the wisdom which is of this world to escape from the simple meaning of that declaration of Jesus. If, in order to hear these words, we can get away from this particular age, and stand among those disciples at Cæsarea Philippi, and listen with them, hearing the words as they heard them, from the standpoint of their consciousness, we shall be far nearer to their meaning than in any other way.

Let us first observe the title which our Lord employed in this statement, "The Son of Man." What did that mean to the men who heard it? The connection of the ancient writings is quite evident. In the Old Testament it rarely occurs, and, indeed, it may be said that it is only found specifically and definitely in one particular prophecy, that of Daniel, and it appears there, only to pass out of sight almost immediately.

"I saw in the night visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." [2]

Daniel asked for an explanation of his vision, and in the

[1] Matt. xvi. 27. [2] Dan. vii. 13, 14.

course of that explanation, these are the words dealing with this particular part of it:

"But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion"—that is, the dominion of the false prince—"and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High: His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him." [1]

Now if, at this distance of time, I should affirm that when Jesus made use of the title "Son of Man" for Himself, He did so intending to assume the title as it appeared in Daniel, it would be a supposition to which some objection might very properly be taken. But when we consider that this particular word in Daniel had produced the profoundest effect upon the Jewish theologians, and that the teachers of the time were constantly employing it in reference to Messiah; then we shall see that it was impossible for any new teacher to employ it, without giving those who heard Him do so the impression that He was using it in that sense.

Extracts from two Jewish writers will show the effect that had been produced upon them by the prophecy of Daniel. The book of Enoch was certainly pre-Christian; —it is not quite easy to date it, but we cover all the ground of suggestion by declaring it was written somewhere in the century preceding the coming of Christ, somewhere between 94 and 4 B. C. In that book are these words:

"And there I saw One who had a Head of Days, and His head was white like wool, and with Him was another being whose countenance had the appearance . . . like one of the holy angels. And I asked the angel who went with me and showed me all the hidden things, concerning that Son of Man, who he was, and whence he was, and why he went with the Head of Days? And he answered and said

[1] Dan. vii. 26, 27.

unto me, This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness, with whom dwelleth righteousness, and who reveals all the treasures of that which is hidden, because the Lord of Spirits hath chosen him, and his lot before the Lord of Spirits hath surpassed everything in uprightness forever. And this Son of Man whom thou hast seen will arouse the kings and the mighty ones from their couches, and the strong from their thrones, and will loosen the reins of the strong, and grind to powder the teeth of the sinners. And He will put down the kings from their thrones and kingdoms, because they do not extol and praise Him, nor thankfully acknowledge whence the kingdom was bestowed upon them." [1]

Or again, in the same book of Enoch:

"And he sat on the throne of his glory and the sum of judgment was committed unto Him, the Son of Man, and he caused the sinners, and those who had led the world astray to pass away and be destroyed from off the face of the earth." [2]

These quotations illustrate the common thought of the time in which Jesus exercised His ministry. The title used by Daniel had taken hold of the hearts of the subsequent teachers, and everywhere there was expectation of some apocalypse, unveiling, out-shining, manifestation, connected with the coming of the Messiah who was referred to as the Son of Man.

In the Apocrypha, in the second book of Esdras, a book written undoubtedly within the first century of the Christian era, about 81 A. D., the same ideas are found. Esdras tells of a dream in which he saw coming

"Up from the midst of the sea as it were the likeness of a man; and I beheld, and lo, that man flew with the clouds of heaven; and when he turned his countenance to look, all things trembled that were seen under him. . . . After this, I beheld, and lo, there was gathered together a multitude

[1] Enoch xlvi. 1–5. [2] Enoch lxix. 27.

of men, out of number, from the four winds of heaven, to make war against the man that had come out of the sea." [1]

When Esdras seeks the interpretation of the dream, he is told:

"Whereas thou sawest a man coming up from the midst of the sea, the same is he whom the Most High hath kept a great season, which by his own self shall deliver his creatures: and he shall order them that are left behind. . . . Behold, the days come when the Most High will begin to deliver them that are upon the earth . . . and it shall be when these things shall come to pass, and the signs shall happen that I showed thee before, then shall my Son be revealed, whom thou sawest as a man ascending. . . . And this my Son shall rebuke the nations which are come for their wickedness. . . . And He shall destroy them without labour by the law, which is likened unto fire." [2]

All this is of importance in that it shows that our Lord used the title Son of Man, knowing that the men who heard understood it as referring to the Messiah. In the subsequent interpretation of the Master's meaning we find a return to the very views that had characterized the most illuminated teachers in the days before the Lord came. Again, Christ used that title for Himself, not once or twice, but constantly; indeed, it was His favourite title for Himself. In declaring the purpose of His mission, He said, "The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost." [3] When He described the method of His mission He said, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." [4] And now when referring to the completion of His work He said: "The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father." [5]

[1] 2 Esdras xiii. 2, 3, 5.
[2] *Ibid.*, xiii. 25, 26, 29, 32, 37, 38.
[3] Luke xix. 10.
[4] Matt. xx. 28.
[5] *Ibid.*, xvi. 27.

Now examining His use of the title on this special occasion in the light of the whole story, everything began with His own question, "Who do men say that the Son of Man is?"[1] And when the answer came from one illuminated soul, "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God,"[2] He accepted the confession, and proceeded to make a declaration concerning His Church, His Cross, and the fact that He was coming again; and announced that by the way of His coming again, the Kingdom whose foundation must be laid in the mystery of His Cross, and whose processes must be carried forward by the conflict of His Church, should be established in the world.

He declared that He Himself would come again, in the glory of His Father, and bringing with Him, for the administration of the affairs of His Kingdom on this earth, the angels of His presence. The avowed purpose of His coming is that of the actual, immediate, visible assumption of authority; and consequent discrimination in the affairs of the world. In that coming again, there will be fulfilled the prophecy of His immediate forerunner, John the Baptist, "Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly cleanse His threshing-floor; and He will gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire."[3] That prophecy our Lord referred to in His own parabolic utterances, as He claimed that at the consummation of the age He would come for the fulfillment of that ministry, the purging of the floor, the gathering of the wheat into the garner, and the burning of chaff in unquenchable fire. These were great figures of speech, all too narrowly interpreted oftentimes, for wheat in that figure of speech is infinitely more than individual men, and chaff may not refer to men at all; or it may, as men have given themselves over to the things of chaff. It is a picture of

[1] Matt. xvi. 13. [2] *Ibid.*, xvi. 16. [3] *Ibid.*, iii. 12.

the Lord Himself coming at the end of the age, and bringing with Him the angels in order to aid Him in His actual ministry in this world; of His coming to destroy all things evil, and establish all things in themselves good; the winnowing of the threshing floor of the world, so that the chaff is separated from the wheat, and gathered for burning, and the wheat harvested into the treasure-house of the King. It is a picture of a final activity of judgment, in which He will separate, not between man and man alone, but between affairs and affairs, things and things, methods and methods; destroying by His own immediate presence and government all the things that are unworthy, and conserving and establishing all that accords with the will of God.

In this teaching of Jesus there are many details omitted, many questions that we should like to ask are unanswered; but enough is revealed to give us courage of heart. To summarize what seem therefore to be the chief matters in this teaching.

First our Lord taught with great distinctness that the processes towards the Kingdom will culminate in a crisis; that the crisis will be created by His own coming again; that it will be as distinct, as definite as was His first coming, and no more wonderful and no more unbelievable; that the activities of His personal coming will be those of judgment. Judgment means far more than punishment. Judgment is separation, restoration, administration, government. We talk of the day of judgment as if it were a day of four and twenty hours. The day of grace has lasted two millenniums. How long may God's day of judgment last? It is quite certain by Biblical prophecy it will last a thousand years, for all the millennium is the day of judgment; and there are hints and gleams in these prophetic writings of a period beyond the millennium. In the book of Revelation the story of the millennium is dismissed in a few

verses; beyond the brief picture of the millennium it is declared that there will be the recrudescence of evil, for during the millennium it is but held in check, and never eliminated. But beyond, it is eradicated, and the glorious Kingdom of the Son is that in which the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He shall dwell with them. All this must be brought to pass by His advent and His judgment of the world; that is, His direct, immediate, positive government of it. He will not come merely to reign over a people who have been subjugated to His sway by the preaching of the Gospel and missionary effort. He will come to reign over all peoples, some of whom will be antagonistic to Him at His advent; and therefore there will be a preliminary process necessary, the winnowing of the floor, the gathering out of things that offend, the casting of them out, in order to the establishment of the Kingdom. But the issue of His second coming will be the subjugation of all things to Himself.

He teaches moreover that the responsibilities of His Church in this period are those of sharing His Cross, and maintaining His conflict; and He carefully warned His disciples, in words that we need most solemnly to ponder, that the judgment is postponed until He come. Darnel and wheat must grow together until He separate them. The net must swing to the tides, and enclose all manner of fishes, until He separate them. So our business is not that of uprooting darnel, but of planting wheat. Our business is not to set up thrones of judgment before which we summon men; but to carry on the conflict with which we dealt in our previous study, the conflict of the resistance of non-resistance:—the perpetual march of victory which is the constant march of defeat. It is the way of the Cross that leads to the crowning.

These certainly are the teachings of Christ according to

the records. Those who are wiser than He must be left to their own problems, and to their own vain conceits. Only let those who are wiser than these words of Jesus consider lest, in zeal for some false conception of God, they may wrong themselves, and the Kingdom of God. An article appeared recently in the *British Weekly*, which is well worthy of very careful attention on the part of Christian people.[1] It has applications beyond this connection, but the title of it immediately arrested my attention,—"Irreligious solicitude for God." The writer of the article shows that Hilary first used that phrase "irreligious solicitude for God," and that he used it in reference to those thinkers who shrank from accepting the full mystery of the Incarnation, because it seemed to be a kind of dishonour to God.

In that very mood some truly fine souls object to the doctrine of the actual second advent of Christ. Such an objection is "irreligious solicitude for God." Let the objection be answered in the words of Mr. Grist. He says,

"A favourite expedient adopted by many is to assume that the apocalypse of Jesus is purely pictorial, and then proceed to 'spiritualize' this teaching by excluding every statement that does not accord with the saying 'The Kingdom of God is within you.' . . . This prevalent mode of exegesis springs in part from a false delicacy or so-called spirituality, which resents every embodiment of ideas, and decries the material side of life in order to exalt the ideal. A world less gross than the one God has created would be needed to satisfy this superior order of minds."[2]

The man who objects to the Incarnation because it dishonours God, objects to that through which he gained the conception of God that now makes him object to the idea of Incarnation. It was only through the Incarnation that the high and exalted ideals of God which men have to-day were made possible. If God did see fit to tabernacle in

[1] June 20th, 1912. [2] "Historic Christ in the Faith of To-day," p. 427.

human flesh, then I worship, though I cannot understand it. The stoop is too infinite for my comprehension, but I dare not question it. And I will not be guilty of such an irreligious solicitude for God as to refuse to believe the apocalyptic word of Jesus, for by other words He so revealed God to me that I am compelled to believe Him when He affirms that He will come again, in order to establish the Kingdom.

To those who believe the teachings of Christ, they bring rest and strength, amid all the conflict of to-day. We realize that all is now as He said it should be; the devil is surely sowing darnel; and so we are confident that all will be according to His word. It was in connection with these very prophecies that He said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."[1] Believing that to be true, we are content in the hour of conflict, in the bearing of the Cross; for upon all the conflict there flashes the glory of the advent, and we are able to sing with mighty old Luther,

"We wait beneath the furnace blast
The pangs of transformation,
Not painlessly doth God recast,
And mould anew the Nation
Where wrongs expire;
Nor spares the hand
That from the land
Uproots the ancient evil.

"Then let the selfish lips be dumb,
And hushed the breath of sighing,
Before the joy of peace must come
The pains of purifying.
God give us grace
Each in his place
To bear his lot;
And, murmuring not,
Endure, and wait the labour."

[1] Matt. xxiv. 35.

VIII. AN INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION

"And it came to pass, when He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching Him. And behold, there was before Him a certain man which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath, or not? But they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go. And He said unto them, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a well, and will not straightway draw him up on a Sabbath day? And they could not answer again unto these things.

"And He spake a parable unto those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief seats; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a marriage feast, sit not down in the chief seat; lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him shall come and say to thee, Give this man place; and then thou shalt begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest place; that when he that hath bidden thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have glory in the presence of all that sit at meat with thee. For every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

"And He said to him also that had bidden him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbours; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just.

"And when one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God. But He said unto him, A certain man made a great supper; and he bade many: and he sent forth his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and maimed and blind and lame. And the servant said, lord, what thou didst command is done, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and

hedges, and constrain them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

"Now there went with Him great multitudes: and He turned, and said unto them, If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and asketh conditions of peace. So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. Salt therefore is good: but if even the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is fit neither for the land nor for the dunghill: men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—*Luke xiv.*

VIII

AN INDIVIDUAL APPLICATION

These words constitute an almost startling individual application on the part of our Lord of His teaching concerning the Kingdom of God. In order that we may catch their true significance, we must recall the circumstances under which they were uttered, and very carefully observe their direct connection with the subject of the Kingdom of God.

This fourteenth chapter in the Gospel of Luke is in some senses complete within itself. It is the story of a Sabbath day in the life of Jesus. It occurred in that period of His ministry when the Pharisees were strangely puzzled by Him, when their early interest in Him was changing to perplexity, and merging towards hostility. One of the rulers had asked Him to his house, and He had accepted the invitation. Jesus was a guest, and the Pharisee was the host. The Pharisees were narrowly watching Him, and He knew it. Among those present was a man sick of dropsy. Deliberately, and of set purpose, the Lord healed the man, and then defended His action as against their unspoken, but self-evident criticism.

Then occurred a strange action on the part of our Lord. As He had already violated all Pharisaic tradition by what He had done, so now He seems to have violated all the common courtesies of hospitality. He was a guest, and as a guest He began to rebuke His fellow guests for the rudeness of the way in which they had assembled. He then turned to the host and rebuked him for the method which he had followed in issuing his invitations.

Imagine a modern preacher acting thus, and we realize

how startling an action this was. He criticized the guests and He criticized the host.

Doubtless all were astonished at the strange things He had been saying; but one man exclaimed: "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God"; [1] and Jesus replied to this man, to whom there had come a sudden moment of clear illumination, "A certain man made a great supper, and he bade many . . . and they all with one consent began to make excuse."

So much for the incidents. Now we must connect this exclamation with the Kingdom teaching of our Lord. Whence it sprang is clearly seen in the text, "When one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." [1] The exclamation was caused by the teaching of Jesus in which He had rebuked, first the guests and then the host. In that teaching certain ideals of social life in the Kingdom were revealed. To the guests the Lord said such things as revealed the necessity for a true humility. He charged them that when they came to feasts they should not seek the best room, or sit in the highest place. And why not? At this point is the heart of the teaching. Notice the actual words of Jesus, "Lest haply a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him." [2] A guest at a social function should refrain from seeking the chief place, in order that the best man may have it. Then He proceeded to declare that the attitude of mind that earnestly desires that the best man should have the best place is demonstration of fitness for the highest place of all.

Turning to the host our Lord said to him that when he made a feast he ought not to call his friends, his kinsmen, his neighbours; but the poor, the maimed, the blind, the halt. But mark the reason for it: "Lest haply they bid

[1] Luke xiv. 15. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 8.

thee again, and a recompense be made thee." This is the law of hospitality in the kingdom of God, not to ask a rich neighbour, lest he should ask us again. Christ said: If you ask a man who can ask you again, his return invitation negatives the true value of your hospitality. There is an appalling amount of commercialism in social life!

Then with that inimitable skill and matchless wisdom that characterized Him, He illuminated the whole situation from the infinite spaces: "Bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind . . . thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just."[2]

Thus He flashed upon the dust of to-day the glory of the coming resurrection, and revealed the fact that all things in this life are to be measured ultimately by the things that lie beyond. Humility in guests is the qualification for the filling of the highest positions at the feast. Hospitality in a host is that which loves to provide, and loves to give, because there can be no recompense. One man sitting at the feast listened to Him, and the glory of the ideal so appealed to him that he exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God!"

These were but illustrations in the realm of social life, yet how searching they were; and they were chosen with consummate wisdom, for in social relationships men, society, and nations stand most clearly revealed as to character. Show me a people as hosts and guests, and I will tell you more about the national character than can be discovered in religious observance, political propaganda, or commercial enterprise. In religious observance men may wear disguises; in political propaganda they may be seeking votes; in commercial enterprise they are safeguarded by a policeman. But in social life they are themselves, and are manifest. If you really want to know what England is as a nation, and

[1] Luke xiv. 12. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 13, 14.

how near it comes to the Kingdom of God, waste no time examining its religious life, or enquiring into its political institutions, or even its commercial enterprises; watch its social relationships, and see how much it knows of the humility that Jesus Christ inculcated; or how much it practices of hospitality according to His ideals. Consider what the character of the people must be when such ideals of humility and hospitality in social life are realized. What manners are these when a man, coming to a feast, halts, because he passionately desires that the best man shall have the best place! What men, and what manners are these, when the host has only one eagerness, that of finding an opportunity to give, never to receive again!

Our mental attitude towards these ideals pronounces them to be *counsels of perfection.* They are impossible! Then Christ is impossible, and God is impossible and the Kingdom is impossible! Let us say so, if we think so. By this means we come to the most searching, sifting tests that our Lord instituted. If at the close of our studies on the teaching of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God, we discussed international arbitration, everybody would approve; but these are our Lord's tests, the way we behave at a feast, the principle upon which we invite our guests, our manner of life in the social circle.

One guest, knowing that the only Kingdom in which such men and manners are possible is the Kingdom of God, cried out, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." The Master, accepting his figure of speech, that of eating bread in the Kingdom of God, uttered the parable of the great supper, which moved in the same realm of social ideas. He carried over the same persons He had already been dealing with, guests and a host, and thus directed the already captured imagination to highest applications. The host is now the King of the Kingdom, the

supper is the bread of the Kingdom, and the guests are those to whom the Kingdom is offered. Of these our Master said, "They all with one consent began to make excuse." The parable is evidently the Lord's reply to a man who admired the Kingdom.

Let us examine the statement as a whole; then glance at the particular illustrations of which our Lord made use; and then pause for one brief look at the teaching that followed.

The teaching of the parable focussed in the text is that it is possible to admire an ideal, and refuse to realize it; that it is possible to vote for the Kingdom of God, and fight against it. The man who exclaimed, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God," was sincere and honest in his admiration. And in effect, the Lord replied: Very well, the Kingdom is open; the invitations are issued; but you will not come in! "They all with one consent began to make excuse."

This is a day of wide-spread admiration for the Kingdom of God, as revealed to us in its ideals and in privileges. These were expressed in the apostolic word: "The Kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." These things are popular within the Church, and outside the Church. Righteousness is well spoken of to-day. Men everywhere are professing to love peace. Joy is the quest of the hour. Yet there is an equally wide-spread refusal to enter into the Kingdom which is righteousness and peace and joy; persistence in wrong, in spite of admiration of right; perpetuation of strife, in spite of the adoration of peace; profanation of joy, by which it is killed. We agree that, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God," but we are not proposing to enter it immediately. There is distinct approbation of the Kingdom as an ideal, accompanied by definite refusal to submit to the King. Men pray, "Thy Kingdom come," and say in their hearts, "We will not have this Man to reign over

us." They say "Lord, Lord," and do not the things that the Lord commands. Some people seem to be profoundly gratified when one of the crowd in Hyde Park calls for cheers for Jesus Christ. Yet such cheers constitute a profanation and a blasphemy until men have crowned Him under the shadow of His Cross, and submitted their lives to His awful and insistent claim upon everything that they have. Thousands of people to-day are saying, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God," and the Master still declares that the supper is spread, the Kingdom is open, but they all with one consent begin to make excuse.

The excuses given aid the apprehension here, for they are full and final in that they not only reveal the facts, but interpret the secrets. The first said, "I have bought a field, and I must needs go out and see it: I pray thee have me excused." And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused." And another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." [1]

Now the common word, describing all these people said, is the word "excuse." "They all with one consent began to make excuse." The first man said, "I pray thee have me excused"; the second man said "I pray thee have me excused"; the last man did not use the word, but definitely declined as he said, "I cannot come," and so he made excuse.

The word itself is suggestive. The Greek means to beg off. They all with one consent began to beg off; as our own word, coming from the Latin, is a singularly apt and accurate interpretation of the idea. An excuse is that from which all reason is absent. An excuse is really a deceit, a subterfuge, the practice of hypocrisy, in order to escape, because there is no reason to give. When a boy at school I went one morning with my homework unprepared. My

[1] Luke xiv. 18–20.

mother did what mothers have a habit of doing; she wrote a note for me to take to my master. I remember it well. It ran, "Will you please excuse Campbell's work this morning?" I gave it to him, and he received it most graciously. When twelve o'clock came, and I was preparing to go home, I heard a voice saying, "Morgan, where are you going?" "Home, sir," I replied. "But your homework is not done!" "No, sir, but I brought a note." "Oh, yes," he said, "that was an excuse, not a reason. You will please remain and do your work!" I have never forgotten the difference between an excuse and a reason from that moment to this. He was quite right. Why was the note written? Because I had no reason to give; I wanted to dodge my work.

"They all with one consent began to make excuse." We must interpret the parable by the exclamation, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God." This man knew perfectly well that in that parable of the great supper the great Teacher was speaking of the Kingdom of God. Though the invitation of God had gone forth, though the table was spread at which men might sit and eat, though the Kingdom had been brought close to them and they might enter in, they were making excuses for remaining outside because they had no reason to give.

One man said he had bought land, and must go and see it. That was the pride of possession. Another said he had bought oxen and must go and prove them. That was attention to business. Yet another said he had married a wife. That was the claim of another affection. All the ground of excuse is covered in these illustrations of Jesus; pride of possession, the claims of business, the mastery of affections other than those for Himself. Excuses all! Pride of possession; if the land be possessed, then enter the Kingdom and learn the secrets of how to develop it. Attention to business; if the oxen be bought, then bring them with thee,

let not a hoof be left behind! By the way, it may be added that the true method of a business man is to prove oxen before they are bought. Earthly affection; that is not to be crucified but sanctified; therefore with the new love enter the Kingdom; and if not, then, If any man love wife more than Me, he is not worthy of Me, said the great King.

None of these things was in itself wrong. It was not wrong to possess land, to buy oxen, or to marry. And therefore the parable teaches the sinfulness of legitimate things when they interfere with the highest; when therefore they prevent the realization of the highest; and when ultimately through the prevention of the realization of the highest, they react upon and destroy themselves. We need to beware of the sinfulness of legitimate things. This teaching is focussed in an actual word of Jesus, uttered in His Manifesto: "Seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The man who fails to obey loses not only the Kingdom, but all the things to which he clings in order to free himself from Kingdom obligations.

Then we glance on down the parable for the final teaching of the Lord. "The master of the house being angry." That is a word of great solemnity, leading up to the declaration: "None of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper." [1] That is figurative language, and the revealed fact is that men who admire the Kingdom of God, but who will not enter, shall never eat its bread. Admiration of the Kingdom of God becomes in time blasphemy and impertinence, unless it lead men to submission to the Kingdom of God.

Then we observe the hospitality of the master of the house; the hospitality that followed upon his anger. He brought in the poor, the maimed and the blind and the lame,

[1] Luke xiv. 21–24.

the very people he had told the host he should ever invite; the poor, entering the Kingdom, come to wealth, the maimed to wholeness; the blind to sight, the lame to power to walk. The hospitality of the great heart of the King expressed itself finally in that word full of exquisite beauty, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and constrain them to come in."

Then Jesus passed out of the house; He crossed the threshold, and the multitudes who had been waiting, and doubtless listening, thronged after Him, and He began to say to them the severest things that ever passed His lips, "If any man cometh unto Me, and hateth not his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. Whosoever doth not bear his own cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. . . . Whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple."[1]

Our Lord thus said to the people who followed Him, and thronged after Him, Let those who admire, and would share the blessedness of the Kingdom, know that they must crown the King, absolutely, and without counting cost or considering conditions. All other ties must be secondary, and severed if they interfere. The way of the Cross must be taken if a man would come into the Kingdom. There must be the renouncing of all possession, property must be held in trust for the Kingdom.

Strange words, severe words; and we ask why? And this is the one occasion on which with greatest clearness He gave the reason for the severity of His terms. "Which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not sit down first and count the cost?"[2] By which He did not mean that they were builders and must count the cost, but that they were the King's helpers, that He was the Builder, and that He must count the cost; that He was the King going to

[1] Luke xiv. 26, 27, 33. [2] *Ibid.*, xiv. 28.

war, and therefore He must count the cost. He needed men in His building upon whom He could depend. He needed warriors who would fight in the day of fiercest conflict. He had to sift the ranks, because the Kingdom, ere it could be established, would demand strenuous toil, constant conflict. So He sifted the ranks.

Now the last saying! Those who admire and refuse to help are salt without savour, are fit only for the dunghill. No, not even fit for that! Cast them out! That was Christ's searching, withering, appalling contempt for men who admire and do not obey. Those poor, bruised, maimed, blind, wretched people, who do not see the beauty, bring them in; I will open their eyes, and heal them! But that smug, self-satisfied man, who listens to the preaching of the Kingdom and says, That is most excellent; and bars his heart against Christ, and puts no blood into the business of building the Kingdom, and knows nothing of the Master's compassion; that man, says Jesus, cast him out. Of all worthless men, that sleek, admiring Pharisee, who does nothing, is the most useless! Cast him out!

What is our attitude towards the Kingdom of God? Intellectual approbation, emotional attraction, and volitional antagonism? Then we are not in the Kingdom; we cannot eat its bread, we cannot help its King; and at last even that King, so fair, so lovely, so patient, so infinite in pity, even He will cast us out.

The only true attitude towards the Kingdom of God is that in which the whole life is surrendered. The only true attitude is that in which the life of the individual becomes a microcosm of the Kingdom that is to be, because it is under the reign and the rule of the King.

If that is not so in your case and mine, why not? Down the millenniums the penetrative voice of Jesus finds its way; excuses, excuses! God help us to have done with excuses, and to enter the Kingdom.

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